

# Squiggly Careers PodSheet

## How to move forward from failure



“ If we are able to remove both **fear** and **ego** when we encounter crisis, we will see failure more clearly for what it is: not as something that defines us, but as a missing piece of knowledge that helps us come closer to completing the jigsaw puzzle of who we truly are.

Elizabeth Day, Author of [How to Fail](#)

### Why learning from failure feels hard

#### Fail = Fault

Leaping to blame ourselves or someone else for failure is part of how we try to make sense of why a failure happened, but **fault-finding gets in the way of learning**.

#### Fail = Fixed

When we fail, we can see ourselves as a 'failure'. An incident can become our identity and **we lose perspective** on the other areas in our life that we are making positive progress in.

#### Fail = Frequent

Our brains find it hard to learn from failure, which means that unless we are very conscious about learning, **we are likely to repeat the same failures** at work.



#### Idea for Action: Pre-empt failure

Try a '**pre-mortem**' to critique all the potential ways a project or process could fail. This can help you to proactively learn how to do things differently.

Ask your **critical friends** to find your potential points of failure. They will often be able to spot things that your positive filter might have missed!



#### Idea for Action: Find the right response

Reflect on whether your failures are '**foolish**', '**fixable**' or because of '**future uncertainty**'

**If foolish then** think about who/what would make a good safety net.

**If fixable then** think about what skills you might need and who could support you with them.

**If it's because of future uncertainty then** spend time scenario planning and thinking through your rescue plan.

### Coach Yourself Questions

? Which factors have contributed to your failures?

? When have you learnt the most from your failure?

### Recommended resources



[Strategies for Learning from Failure](#) by Professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School Amy C. Edmondson.



[The unexpected benefit of celebrating failure](#) Ted talk by entrepreneur and inventor Astro Teller on experimentation and failure.



[How to fail podcast](#) by author, journalist and broadcaster Elizabeth Day.