

Failure

Failure hurts. And, in the moment, it can be debilitating. If we take the time to process it, however, each of our failures holds within it a gift; let me explain.

When I got to high school, I really wanted to make the basketball team. Unfortunately, I wasn't very good. I worked hard and made some progress, but when try-outs rolled around, I was part of that stew of unremarkable kids—the coach thanked us for trying-out, praised us for our efforts and invited us to try-out again next year; for this year, though, there weren't enough spots on the team. We were cut.

In that moment and for the next couple of days, I was really disappointed. All of my friends were on the team, and I felt like an outsider when we gathered for lunch and talk turned to basketball. After-school, when they went to practice, I would board the bus for home and tackle my schoolwork. At that time in my life, you couldn't convince me that **failure** to make the basketball team was a “gift.”

In retrospect, however, that **failure** opened the door for me to explore new things and devote more time to my baseball pursuits; over time, I came to realize that achieving a goal requires more than talent and “some practice.” It requires a plan.

My **failure** taught me the virtue of planning and to this day I try to find the gift in all of my setbacks (big & small). Let's just say, it keeps me busy. Perhaps the biggest gift in learning to de-construct failure is that I now have a different perspective on what it means to fail and I can share that with my children. If they can view themselves and their **failures** in a more compassionate light then maybe getting cut from freshman basketball wasn't such a bad thing after all....