
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Take Away English 隨身英語

Smarter ways to learn from failure

從失敗中學習的聰明方法



字彙 : *failure* 失敗

Many of us were told from an early age that, be it at school or in life, "you learn from your mistakes". But is this actually true?

The short answer is 'yes' – failure can be a **teachable moment**. But learning from our mistakes is, in reality, very hard because we don't like to fail. It doesn't feel good, so we react to failure in **impulsive** and emotional ways, like giving up on a task **prematurely**, telling ourselves we don't care whether we **succeed**, or **finding fault with** the task itself. This is **self-protective**, according to Hallgeir Sjøstad, a professor of psychology and leadership at the Norwegian School of Economics. "Most of us want to think of ourselves as **competent** and **capable**", he says, so when we fail "it **poses a serious threat to** our **self-image**".

Fortunately, there is research to suggest that there are some **strategies** to help us **overcome** the emotional **barriers** around failure. One of them is to **adopt a third-person perspective**. Instead of asking "Why did I fail?", we could ask "Why did Sam fail?", for example. Multiple studies by psychologist Ethan Kross at the University of Michigan show that adopting a third-person perspective helps to **soften** our negative emotional reactions, allowing us to look at failure more **objectively**.

A second strategy involves offering advice to others who may be **in the same position as us**. This strategy led to better levels of **motivation** and academic success in the test groups – involving both adults and children – that were asked to give advice based on their own failures. Professors Eskreis-Winkler, Fishbach and Duckworth found that the **satisfaction** of helping others "forces people to **engage with** their experience and what they have learned".

The writer Samuel Beckett once said: "fail again, fail better". But it now seems that we should be saying: "fail again, fail smarter". Failure is an **inevitable** part of life, but by learning to overcome the emotional barriers around it, we may find the road to success is a little easier to **navigate**.

字彙表

teachable moment	施教時刻，值得學習的時刻
impulsive	衝動的
prematurely	過早地
succeed	成功
find fault with	挑剔，找岔子
self-protective	自我保護的
competent	有能力的
capable	能幹的
pose a threat to	對...造成威脅
self-image	自我形象
strategy	策略
overcome	克服
barrier	障礙
adopt a perspective	採用...觀點
third-person	第三人稱的
soften	緩和
objectively	客觀地
in the same position as	處境相同的
motivation	積極性
satisfaction	滿足感
engage with	直面，參與
inevitable	不可避免的
navigate	駕馭，穿越

測驗與練習

1. 閱讀課文並回答問題。

1. True or False? *You learn from your mistakes.*
2. How does failure pose a threat to our self-image?
3. What kind of barriers do we need to overcome to learn from failure?
4. True or False? *A third-person perspective helps us be less emotional about our failures.*
5. How can helping others change our perspective on failure?

2. 選擇意思恰當的單字或片語來完成下列句子。

1. Mark is so _____! He never thinks before he acts.

self-protective	impulsive	confident	capable
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2. Please stop criticising me! You're _____ everything I do today.

finding fault with	barriers	inevitable	adopting a perspective
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3. Pollution _____ the environment and causes global warming.

poses a threat to	overcomes	navigates	in the same position as
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4. She used to be very shy, but she was eventually able to _____ her shyness and is now very outgoing and sociable.

succeed	soften	engage with	overcome
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5. My father got a lot of _____ from watching my brother take over the family business.

strategies	motivation	satisfaction	teachable moments
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答案

1. 閱讀課文並回答問題。

1. True or False? *You learn from your mistakes.*

True. Failure can be a teachable moment.

2. How does failure pose a threat to our self-image?

According to Hallgeir Sjøstad, "most of us want to think of ourselves as competent and capable". Our failures directly contradict with this idea of ourselves and therefore pose a threat to our self-image.

3. What kind of barriers do we need to overcome to learn from failure?

We need to overcome the emotional barriers around failure before we can learn from it.

4. True or False? *A third-person perspective helps us be less emotional about our failures.*

True. Adopting a third-person perspective helps to soften our negative emotional reactions, allowing us to look at failure more objectively.

5. How can helping others change our perspective on failure?

Giving advice based on our own failures forces us to engage with our experience and what we have learned.

2. 選擇意思恰當的單字或片語來完成下列句子。

1. Mark is so **impulsive**! He never thinks before he acts.

2. Please stop criticising me! You're **finding fault with** everything I do today.

3. Pollution **poses a threat to** the environment and causes global warming.

4. She used to be very shy, but she was eventually able to **overcome** her shyness and is now very outgoing and sociable.

5. My father got a lot of **satisfaction** from watching my brother take over the family business.