

# The Anti-Mistakes Culture: What Keeps Young People From Succeeding

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You know what you want. Really. Deep down you secretly know, and you don't really want to admit it. You're shrugging your shoulders, frowning or raising your eyebrows as if you don't know what I'm talking about. Can I see you through that screen? Nope, you're just not that special, you're having the same issues as most of us. Maybe you set your true wishes and goals aside and focused on the things that society or loved ones expect from you: get your education, get your first job to pay the rent, get a family. Was that what you really wanted? If yes, then bravo, and this article might not be for you. But if you think I got something worthy going on here, keep on reading.

Especially if you're young, you have to realize that you have a tremendous incredible advantage. You have time to make mistakes. Most of you are financially sustained by your parents in high school, or even in your first years of college. Don't waste that time, you now have the possibility to focus on what you want and do stuff without expecting anything in return. And if you have the passion, curiosity and drive to do something and you're not expecting anything in return, that's an endeavor you need to follow in the future.

Do you like having a six pack? For those who have it, most of you paid for that six pack in advance with lots of gym time and lots of ambition not to grab those unhealthy carbs in the middle of the night. Our pain often makes us stronger, more grounded and more resilient. That's good — that's the beginning.

So, keep this in mind:

**In order to get what you want, you need to pay for it in advance.**

I've heard this story about a mathematics professor that wrote on the chalkboard the following equations:

$$9 \times 1 = 7$$

$$9 \times 2 = 18$$

$$9 \times 3 = 27$$

$$9 \times 4 = 36$$

$$9 \times 5 = 45$$

$$9 \times 6 = 54$$

$$9 \times 7 = 63$$

$$9 \times 8 = 72$$

$$9 \times 9 = 81$$

And he made one mistake at  $9 \times 1$ . He said it equaled 7. The rest were correct. The natural response was for everybody in the class to start laughing. To that, the professor said: "Interesting. So I did 8 of them correct, but you all laughed because I did one wrong. And that's what's wrong with society. We're teaching people that if they do anything wrong, everything is wrong. And that's just not how things go."

Avoiding failure is something that comes from our education system we learn in school. Remember those red indications on your school paper? Frequently we penalize the mistakes of children in school, we cross things out because the answer doesn't fit that box etc.

Meaningful learning happens when trials and errors occur naturally and logically. Children should be able to make mistakes as often or as necessary to understand and learn what they are working on and how to understand it better. Punishing only produces frustration and demotivation. No one is born all knowing and in order to get to know stuff, you need to screw up on your own.

At some point, you need to expose yourself to failure and avoid sticking only to the thing that you feel you're already good at. And I have bad news for you. Exceptionalism will be the new normal. Yes, it's ok to be average at most things, but you need to become really good at something in order to make it and you have to dedicate tons of time and energy to it.

Unfortunately, the other side of the coin will be to be a fuckup, to hit rock bottom, but even then, at the end of our worst moments, just remember that you can only go up from there. All day, every day you can make tons of tiny mistakes that can lead you to a positive outcome in the end, to a revelation. You just have to do something, to act on things. Nonstop. So why not try?

The mistake culture that we've been brought up in is the underlying condition that's keeping us away from trying, from even having a chance at winning the game.

And I don't know about you, but I would rather play the game and have a chance to win than watch it and not have a chance. That's how I look at things: if you don't play the game, you're not going to win.

There's not a game in which you can only win, that's not a game, that's a trick. So the only way you can win is exposing yourself to failure.

Are you willing to succeed? Then fail.

**Without mistakes, there is no growth, no innovation, no progress.**

When we're afraid, our brain checks for possibilities and only wants to follow certainty. That's what us humans do when we're in a fog, we search for certainty in the outside world, and that's screwed up. When people get too certain about things, that's when they start getting into trouble. What is certain? Other people's success. So it suddenly seems like a good option to take after them because maybe I'm just sitting on a smelly, tore up couch counting my coins for a tasteless sandwich, and I haven't heard a single word from any company I've applied to so they must be doing something

right. The way that follows up is “How can I get that?”.

Basically, we get that from people that have the confidence, and we do what they tell us to do, and what works for them. Those people are not always in a good position to teach you anything. You can be bewildered because everything you previously thought to be great has turned out to be the opposite. That’s how we end up waiting in line for a product that’s not even worth the money spent on the packaging. That’s how we end up believing the same things that our friends believe in order to fit in. If you haven’t figured it out how they did it, it’s because they have more confidence and they have less fear. And because we don’t know what we want and we’re afraid of failure, therefore we cannot emotionally take shots and chances and we’re just playing it safe.

### **And the safe route is the safe route to death.**

Usually, our biggest achievements come in the face of the greatest adversity. You have to go against what you’ve been told or what you’ve seen in order to win. Especially if you’re young, the faster you do it, the better you will become. The faster you understand you and figure out what you like, what are your passions, how you can accept mistakes and feel good about them, how you can take your fear out of your life by facing it, the more you can become the real ‘you’, express yourself more and guess what?

After you’ve got some momentum it’s really hard for other people to stop you.

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