

Turning Business Failures into Future Success

Get up and keep following your dream

BY DANIEL R. CASTRO

Perhaps your professional life isn't going exactly like you thought it was supposed to go. Maybe you've made a series of bad decisions or even one really bad choice that you can't seem to bounce back from. Maybe you've been downsized or terminated. Maybe your best-laid plans have failed and circumstances beyond your control—from market downturns to bad weather to a key player's incompetence—have put you in the danger zone, or even out in the street.

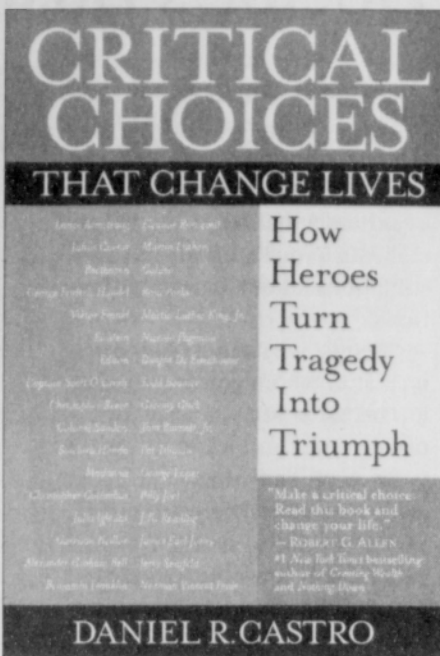
You may not realize it right now, but you do have options. You could wallow in self-pity, or remain angry at those whom you blame for your current situation. Or you can turn your past disappointments into great accomplishments. How? Just follow the path of the heroes who've gone before you. They will show you how to transform past adversity and failures into springboards for success.

Tip No. 1: Take an objective, not an emotional look at where you've come from.

Thomas Edison believed there were no such things as mistakes, only eliminated options



Daniel R. Castro (above) is author of "Critical Choices that Change Lives: How Heroes Turn Tragedy into Triumph."



that brought him one step closer to his goal. There is no such thing as "failure," he claimed, only lessons to be learned.

As adults, we take failure personally, believing our lack of success indicates a lack in our character. Instead, we must look at the situation objectively, as a matter of cause and effect. The fact that we fail in business situations does not mean we are failures, but rather that we didn't create the right cause to achieve the desired effect.

If you find yourself in a stuck emotional state, go back and analyze the steps you took and see what you might have done differently. Remove the emotional involvement; just look at the raw data.

Tip No. 2: Focus on the purpose on the other side of the pain.

Happiness does not come from the elimination of pain, but from the realization of your purpose. Keep reminding yourself why you are doing what you're doing. Even less lofty purposes, such as "I just work here to pay the rent and my car payment," can be transformed over time if you look at the higher purpose for why you might be there.

Without a sense of purpose, you will lack motivation and consciously or subconsciously doom yourself to failure.

Tip No. 3: You can't see the whole parade from where you stand.

You never know from where

you stand whether what you are experiencing will turn out to be good or bad until enough time has passed. A seemingly hopeless situation may be exactly the disaster you fear, but it may also turn from catastrophe into triumph in ways you are unable to predict.

When people get stuck in "Why me?" mode as a result of a severe business loss, they require a mindshift in order to recover a sense of belief, hope, and inner strength so they can move on. When we make a deliberate decision not to give up, then life seems to present opportunities we hadn't thought of or couldn't create ourselves.

Tip no 4: It's not whether you have won or lost in the past; it's the person you have to become in order to win in the future.

After a business failure has led you to analyze the objective data of your experience, you

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Local Business Builds for Higher Capacity Construction firm takes steps to grow

Boanerges Group, a small minority-owned construction contractor located in northeast Portland, has an eye towards increasing its capacity to perform work in the highway construction industry. The firm specializes in concrete flat work, fencing, signs and guardrail.

Sharon Maxwell-Hendricks, the owner, has 11 years experience in the industry. She started Boanerges five years ago.

Hendricks said "doing the work and seeing all aspects of it come together" is what she enjoys most about the business.

She advises that a young person interested in construction should obtain a solid knowledge of applied math.

Her company has completed small sidewalks, fencing and guardrail projects. Sharon says a major challenge is the ability to compete for work with large bonding requirements. Her firm cannot compete for some larger projects because she cannot get the required bonding.

In taking steps to grow her company, Hendricks utilizes the resources offered through the



Construction contractor Sharon Maxwell-Hendrix is owner of the Boanerges Group.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Supportive Services Program in the Oregon Department of Transportation.

She recently participated in a DBE project outreach conference to review project specifications, meet ODOT project management, and offer her services to eligible bidders.

When asked if the DBE pro-

gram had helped her firm win contracts, she said, "Not to date, but it has helped to provide technical assistance with bids, information on the system and contact with generals, information for scope letters and going out to meet with generals."

For more information, contact Hendricks at 503-281-0224.

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"We salute Portland's minority owned businesses."