

Growth Mindset Lesson

Famous Failures

Students will learn about 6 famous failures in a cooperative learning environment.



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Growth Mindset Lesson

Famous Failures

Objective:

Students will learn that it is okay to fail, as long as they keep trying.

Grade Level(s):

Grades 3-12

Time:

60 Minutes

Activity:

1. Explain to students that failure is necessary in growing our brains (getting smarter).
2. Arrange students into six groups. Set up six areas in the room for a station. Print out the Famous Failures Handout and put one at each station.
3. Place index cards or post it notes at each station for students to record their thinking
4. Assign groups to each station. Start a timer for 5 minutes, then have them follow the directions on the handout.
5. Groups will switch stations every five minutes until they have been to each station.
6. Bring the groups back together. Lead a whole group discussion about each Famous Failure.
7. Ask students to give you characteristics that they each possessed. List answers on the board.
8. Have students work individually or in pairs to create a list of self-talk that these Famous Failures had to say to themselves in order to persevere through hard times. Some examples of responses: "I have to work hard." and "I will not give up."
9. Have a whole group discussion about how these characteristics and positive self-talk will lead them to their own success, even if they fail first.
10. Students will fill out the Self-Reflection sheet independently.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Famous Failures

Read about the famous failure, then follow the directions that follow.

Michael Jordan, NBA Basketball Player

As a sophomore, Michael Jordan, who had great basketball skills, tried out for his high school basketball team. After several practices, of being watched closely by the coaching staff Jordan was told he wasn't good enough for the varsity basketball team; however, his much taller friend made the team. After being cut from the team, he went home and locked himself in his bedroom and cried. All he ever wanted was to play basketball and now his chance had been taken away from him.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What would you have done?
2. What do you think he did?

Continue Reading:

Jordan only cried for a short period of time, he then used the disappointment as rocket fuel to succeed. He worked even harder, spending many hours in his driveway shooting baskets, while the rest of his friends were playing. Also, he searched for advice from other people who knew about basketball and worked endlessly.

Michael Jordan is now known as possibly the best basketball player to ever play basketball. Not only did Jordan play over a decade in the NBA, he has 6 NBA championships, 5 NBA MVP awards and has been apart of 4 NBA all-star teams.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What actions did Jordan take to turn his failure into a success?
2. What character traits does Jordan have that lead him to success?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Famous Failures

Read about the famous failures, then follow the directions that follow.

Steve Jobs, Creator of Apple

Steve Jobs was born to a mother and father who did not want him. They gave him up for adoption when he was a newborn. When he was in elementary school Steve was bored and often played pranks. He was very smart, but did not try very hard in class. When was accepted to a college, he quit because he was not interested in learning. However, when he saw his first computer, he was amazed and immediately became interested. He and his friend decided to start a computer company. Together they created the Apple computer, the first computer to ever be in color. Later, the computer company that Jobs created, fired him. He was then without a job and with no money.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What went wrong with Steve Jobs? Why?
2. What characteristics do you share with Steve Jobs?

Continue Reading:

Steve was very upset about being fired and became depressed. He spent time trying to figure out where he had gone wrong and decided that he was not giving his best effort while working at Apple. He worked to prove himself to his former company and was hired back. Steve started giving his personal best and then created the iPod, which revolutionized the computer industry. Also, he owned Pixar Films, which is a very popular digital cartoon company. From there, he created the iPad. Steve Jobs was one of the richest men in the world before his death.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What actions did Steve Jobs take that changed his life?
2. Name one lesson that Steve Jobs learned through his failures?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Famous Failures

Read about the famous failures, then follow the directions that follow.

Henry Ford, Creator of Ford Motor Company

Henry Ford was born to poor farmers in the late 1800s. When Ford was 13 years old, his father gifted him a pocket watch, which the young boy promptly took apart and reassembled. Friends and neighbors were impressed and requested that he fix their watches too. Bored with farm work, he left the farm and began working on steam engines; however, he wanted to create the first vehicle for road travel. He made a car, but it didn't work. He tried four more times and failed each time.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What would you do if you tried five times and failed? Would you have quit after the first time? Why or why not?
2. What characteristics would it take to keep trying?

Continue Reading:

In 1903, after a few trials building cars and companies, Henry Ford established the Ford Motor Company. Ford introduced the Model T in October of 1908, and for several years, the company posted 100 percent gains. However, more than for his profits, Ford became renowned for his revolutionary vision. He was known for manufacturing an inexpensive automobile made by skilled workers, who earned a steady wages.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What actions helped Henry Ford succeed?
2. What characteristics did Ford have that you wish you had? Do you share any characteristics?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Famous Failures

Read about the famous failures, then follow the directions that follow.

Walt Disney, Creator of Walt Disney World and the Disney Empire

Walt Disney was a poor young boy, growing up on a farm outside of Chicago, Illinois. When he was four years old, he became fascinated with drawing. His dream of creating cartoons was blossoming. As a young adult, he landed a dream job of creating cartoons for a newspaper. Not too long later, he was fired for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas." Upset, he decided to start his own company, making cartoons. The cartoons were great, but it made no money and he had to close it down and declare bankruptcy.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What failures did Walt Disney experience?
2. What would you do if you failed twice at reaching your dream?

Continue Reading:

Disney started over once more, but this time he created a cartoon character named Mickey Mouse. Also, he created the first animated film to have sound. People were very excited about the new cartoon and his business took off. Disney won 22 Academy Awards for his cartoons. His empire expanded to owning the most popular amusement parks in the world, along with a multi-billion dollar cartoon industry, which includes the most beloved children's movies.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. Finish the sentence: Walt Disney proved that _____
2. What obstacles did Walt Disney overcome to reach success?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Famous Failures

Read about the famous failures, then follow the directions that follow.

Oprah Winfrey, Talk Show Host (Oprah Winfrey Show)

Oprah Winfrey was a poor young African American child in the 1950s. When she was young, her mother and father both left her to be raised by her grandmother. She experienced abuse, poverty and a lot of disappointment. Still, she had a dream of being on television. She worked very hard through school and college, Oprah got a job at a news anchor but was demoted because the producers felt she “wasn't fit for television.”

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What are some factors in Oprah's young life that some would say “set her up for failure”?
2. In what ways did Oprah fail?

Continue Reading:

Oprah did not give up on her dream; if anything, she was more motivated to prove them wrong. She kept working diligently. Not only did she win back her job as a news anchor, she went on to starting her own television show, that was the longest running daytime talk show ever. In addition, she is now known as the most influential woman in the world and owns her own cable television network. She is well-known for her charity work, including helping young poor girls get a chance at obtaining a quality education.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. In what ways did Oprah overcome her circumstances?
2. How might the world be different without her success?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Famous Failures

Read about the famous failures, then follow the directions that follow.

Albert Einstein, Scientist

Albert Einstein, a Jewish child growing up in Germany, was not able to speak until he was four years old. People questioned his development and intelligence. When he started school, his teachers remarked that he “wouldn’t amount to much.” As a young child, he questioned if he was smart or not. In 1894 he dropped out of school and moved to Switzerland.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. Why would Albert Einstein think he isn’t smart?
2. What are some reasons that Einstein would not have succeeded in life?

Continue Reading:

After moving to Switzerland, Einstein missed school and went back to get his education. After finishing high school, he was admitted to Swiss Federal Polytechnic Institute in Zurich. From there, his desire to exploring learning was magnified. He had ideas about how the world worked that no one else had ever even thought of, like relativity, gravity and the speed of light. His work in the science field is more important than the work of any other scientist.

STOP and respond to the following questions in your group:

1. What obstacles did Einstein overcome?
2. What character traits did Einstein have that helped him succeed?

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