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An ADD Case Study: What Does it Mean to "Fail"?

By Jennifer Koretsky

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by: **Jennifer Koretsky**

Josh is a client of mine who is a junior in college. He's very smart. He's amazingly smart. Talk to Josh for an hour and you'll know how smart he is. But if you don't know Josh and you look at his grades from previous semesters, you would probably guess that he wasn't smart at all.

Josh gets frustrated in school. He works hard, but often finds that the pressure of test taking overwhelms him, and his grades suffer for it.

Recently, Josh had a midterm in his Economics class. He knew it would be tough. He hates this class, but it's required for his Business major. He had one test in the class already, which he did not pass. For the midterm, there were 3 books to review, and pages upon pages of notes to memorize. But he was determined to get an A. Three weeks prior to the test, he began setting aside review time. He highlighted the books, and took notes on them. He rewrote his notes to memorize them. And he even formed a study group with some of his classmates.

The morning of the test, Josh felt good. He had plenty of rest the night before, he ate a good breakfast, and he was ready to ace his Economics test. He got to the classroom, ready to go, and when the test was handed out and he flipped through it, he froze. The test was four pages long, with short answer questions, math problems, and an essay. Even though he had studied so hard, Josh started to doubt himself. He did his best to push past the anxiety and overwhelm and finish the test. Then he went back to his dorm room and slept. He was physically and emotionally spent.

A week went by before Josh got his test back. It was a B. He had studied so hard, he knew the material, and yet all he got was a B. He was crushed. "I did the best I could, I worked so hard to overcome this test-taking fear, and I failed."

"What exactly did you fail at?" I asked.

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"I got a B," he replied. "I put so much work into that test that I should have got an A."

For Josh, it was very easy to look at the situation and see failure. He wanted an A. He wanted to prove to himself, his parents, and his professor that he could ace this test. And Josh was so busy holding himself up to unrealistic expectations, that he completely missed his successes: He stuck to the structure that we created for him. He developed excellent study habits to prepare for the test. He got a B! He answered approximately 80% of the questions correctly, when just a month ago he wasn't passing the class.

I pointed this out to Josh and, although he listened, he only half-heartedly agreed.

Then, two days ago, I got this email from Josh:

"Dear Jen,

I got my philosophy test back today and guess what, I got an A-! I thought about what you said and realized that I have been doing really good studying this semester and I am doing better than I ever have. My dad is so excited about my B and A-. Thanks for pointing it out because sometimes its hard to see the good stuff."

I agree. Sometimes it is hard to see the good stuff – whether you're a student, an artist, an office worker, a business owner, or a parent. When that happens, look harder. Even if you "fail," you'll still learn something about yourself or the situation you're in. And if you're learning, then you're really not failing, are you...?

This story was shared with Josh's permission.

Jennifer Koretsky is a Professional ADD Management Coach who helps adults manage their ADD and move forward in life. She encourages clients to increase self-awareness, focus on strengths and talents, and create realistic action plans. She offers a 90-day intensive skill-building program, workshops, and private coaching. Her work has been featured in numerous media, including The New York Times Magazine and The Times (UK). To subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, please visit

Taking Action

By John Calder

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The single most common cause of failure for Internet marketers, no matter how long they've been around, is inaction. It's that simple. Most fail because they never do anything. They buy ebooks, subscribe to ezines, join membership sites, post on all the forums, and buy all the new software. They study, think, research, dream, plan, and analyze, but never do.

We know they have the best of intentions, and certainly have the desire to improve their situation in some way. Whether they want to earn extra income from an online business, earn a full-time income from home, or have a shot at earning more money than they ever could from a job, their motivations are certainly true. That's what led them to take a look at Internet marketing as a way of fulfilling their goals in the first place. But why don't they follow through?

Professionals who study the mind have a couple of answers. Some will say this is all psychological mumbo-jumbo, but hear them out. One simple reason given is inertia. It's easier to do nothing instead of something. Even if we're highly motivated, it can be difficult to get started.

The other two most commonly offered reasons are related to fear. Oddly enough, they are opposites, but both have the same result on us. Fear of failure makes us uncomfortable to step out of our comfort zone, to try something new, because we might fail. And fear of success keeps us from trying too, because with success might come criticism and pressure to have to repeat, or worse, improve on that first success. And we might fail at that, which brings on the cycle again.

At the risk of sounding trite, they say you don't fail unless you quit. Try to overcome whatever is holding you back – don't quit before you even get started.

John Calder is the owner/editor of The Ezine Dot Net. Subscribe Today and get real information YOU can use to help build your online business today! <http://www.TheEzine.Net>

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