

Recitation 3 **J.K. Rowling, The Author of the Harry Potter Series**

Learning from Failure (Modified)

I had failed on an epic scale. My marriage had ended, and I was jobless, a single parent, and as poor as it is possible to be in modern Britain without being homeless. My parents had lived in poverty as children. The fears of poverty that my parents had had for me, and that I had had for myself, had come true. And by every standard, I was the biggest failure I knew.

Now, I am not going to stand here and tell you that failure is fun. That period of my life was a dark one. I had no idea that there was going to be a kind of fairy tale ending. I had no idea that the Harry Potter series would become so successful. So, why do I talk about the benefits of failure? Simply because failure meant stripping away everything that is unnecessary. I stopped pretending that I was someone else. And I began to direct all my energy into finishing the only work that mattered to me - writing.

I was set free, because my greatest fear had been realized. I was still alive. I still had a daughter I adored. And I had an old typewriter and a big idea. And so rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.

You might never fail on the scale I did, but some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all.

Failure gave me an inner security that I had never gained by passing examinations. Failure taught me things about myself that I could have learned no other way. I discovered that I had a strong will. I also found out that I had friends whose value cannot be measured.

From failure, you gain the knowledge that you have become wiser and stronger, and you gain the confidence that you are secure in your ability to survive. You will never truly know yourself or the strength of your relationships, until both have been tested by hard times. Such knowledge is a true gift. It is painfully won, but it has been worth more than any qualification I ever earned.

Word count: 377