

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/f-a-i-l-first-attempt-in-learning/>

If you're always successful, suggests business leader, author and rocket scientist Sylvia Acevedo, you're probably not stretching yourself enough. It's okay to fail, she reminds us. But it's also important to analyze failures. Postmortems on any project allow you to see opportunities in projects that failed, and also identify small failures in projects that were overall a smashing success—so that you can have an even bigger success next time.



## Transcript

- To be successful, you are going to fail.. 00:00:08,410 And if you're always successful, it is almost as though you're not stretching yourself enough.. They always say that it's like, if you're hitting the bullseye every time, you got to step back away from the target.. So understanding that if you fail, you know, failures, I like to say that failure is first attempt in learning.. And so to really say to yourself, "I failed" doesn't mean that you're a failure.. It just meant that at that time, that didn't work out.. So then you figure out, why didn't it work out? What could you control? What couldn't you control? If you think about the year we've been living in, 2020, there were some things that were, frankly, just out of our control, right? In other times that isn't always the case, but it's so important when you're trying things and they didn't work out to take some time to figure out why they didn't.. And I will say, that is another thing that I have done throughout my career, is, after we've done anything, even if it's successful, and also if it's not been successful, if it's failed, we always say, okay, what went right? What went wrong? What could we have done better? Because you learn from that, even the most successful activity, event, you've got to take that moment to go back and figure out, you know, what went right, so you can figure out how to make sure you do that again, what didn't work as well as we wanted, so you can work on, how do you fix that, and then what would you like to do a little bit differently? I always instituted that and that was just, I was surprised how many people just do something, oh, it didn't work out, and move on to the next, without taking that moment really first attempt in learning, of learning from that experience...