

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/success-and-failure-in-the-biodesign-process/>

Josh Makower, director and co-founder of the Stanford Byers Center for Biodesign, explains that following the biodesign process doesn't guarantee you'll never fail. The most important element of success, he adds, is a mission-driven team that can pivot when an idea doesn't work out.



Transcript

- I will say I've had many failures myself.. 00:00:07,370 I didn't put them in the beginning slide deck there.. They're not that fun to talk about, but I have failed and everybody fails.. I mean, if you're not failing, you're not trying hard enough.. So you've gotta go, now, the reasons for failure didn't have anything to do with the process not working.. It's just that at some point there are always pieces of the project that are unknown and those unknown things, you know, once you do the study and it's known, sometimes it's an answer that you wish wasn't there, but it's data, it's science, right? So, yes, I think that it is not foolproof.. The method is only really good to identify the potential pathway.. It isn't like you're always a success, 'cause that isn't true, even in my own experience with it, but you're gonna increase your probability of success with it.. That's the reason to use the rigorous process that we teach, is at least you'll eliminate all those easy problems that most people make that don't follow it.. And you get those out of the way..

And those can be retired early.. The through line in terms of success, however, is the team.. People, like I mentioned before, they are the difference maker.. And so even when the idea doesn't work or you finally get that result and you realize that it doesn't pan out, if the team is good, you can pivot and get to the right answer.. So I really believe in teams, you know, picking the right people for these projects is key because I've just been so amazed by the leaders of the companies that, you know, have had a great opportunity to create and see how they have pivoted around the problems that they've had.. And they come in all sorts of ways.. Some of them can have nothing to do with the idea itself, but it's the regulatory process or trying to get the thing paid for, or it's trying to raise money in a bad environment or whatever it is.. There's so many ways to fail.. But if you have a group of people who are mission-driven and looking under every rock to try to make sure that they have a chance for success, that is the through line for success, ultimately...