

You stood up in front of 200 students to do an assembly and your mind went blank. You spent hours planning the youth session, making sure that everything was ready, gathering all the resources needed, expecting 30 young people to show and 2 come. You delivered a talk and received several encouragements; however, someone said that communication may not be one of your strengths or perhaps you delivered a talk which was met with silence afterwards. I am sure we can all recall times, when things haven’t turned out quite as we hoped, or we walk away from delivering a talk, a session, a lesson feeling like we ‘messed up.’ How do we pick up ourselves and keep going?

The perspective that we hold when it comes to failure is vital. Thomas Edison is known for the invention of the lightbulb, however the lightbulb didn’t start working the first time, as Edison said *“I have not failed 10,000 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 10,000 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work.”*

We live in a culture where things need to be perfect, and in turn fear failure. On social media, the perfect snapshot image is caught, instead of the reality -the 100 photos that had to be taken before the one which is posted.

I am passionate about building resilience in Young People, this has come out of experience of learning what it means to be resilient, to keep going, when the easy thing would be to stop, or to give up. God has a great way of weaving our stories together and using what we go through to be able to teach us, grow, shape and mould us to become more Christ like. So how do we manage the emotions and thoughts that come when we feel like we have messed up. Below are 10 top tips on how to manage when things don’t turn out as hoped.

1. **Top Tips on how to manage when things don’t turn out as hoped**
2. **Remember your** **WHY.** When things don’t go as we hope, whether that is a youth session, a project planned, a talk, a school lesson. Remember the big picture of why you are doing it, your passion, purpose, and reason. It is important to remember the big picture and keep perspective on the situation. A practical tip can be to write out your why and stick it up as a constant reminder – in the good times and in the challenges!
3. **Acknowledge the emotions that you feel**. It is important to acknowledge the emotions you feel such as disappointment, or sadness, especially if it had been something that you had worked hard towards, but at the same it is important not to dwell or to keep going over and replaying the situation as it can be unhelpful, and you can become stuck in an unhelpful thought pattern.
4. **Be Kind to yourself.** I am very aware that I can be my own worst critic, especially if something didn’t go as I had planned. Therefore, we need to make sure that show ourselves some compassion and be kind to ourselves. A question I often ask my mentees to reflect on is ‘*what would you say to a friend in this situation?’* Often, we need to listen to the advice that we would give to others!
5. **Have a support team.** It is important to have a team of people who are your source of support and encouragement. Those who will cheer you on, stand with you in prayer, who you can be honest with and who can also be honest with you.
6. **When we are weak** **God is strong.** When we step out and feel out of our comfort zone, God is strong. We cannot do this alone. The great news is that even when we do make mistakes God can still use them for his good.
7. **Remember where your identity lies.** When we make a mistake, it can be easy for us to put labels on ourselves or perhaps even the criticism or words of other people. It can even be easy for our role to become our identity. Therefore, it is important for us to remember where our identity lies, that we are a child of God, precious, loved, accepted, and saved by what Jesus has already done for us on the cross.
8. **Step out of our comfort zone**. Our comfort zone is comfortable; however, it is not the place where we will grow. If we have been knocked it can be hard to step out again or to take a risk, it can feel vulnerable. However, stepping out of our comfort zone is where we will grow. With the right support and encouragement stepping out of your comfort zone is the place where you learn more of who God created you to be and a place of great adventure.
9. **Learning comes from mistakes**. It is important to create a culture where mistakes can be made and where it is seen as an opportunity to learn. Just because a mistake happened or it didn’t go as we hoped the first time, doesn’t mean that it will always happen or turn out the same way in the future. We are on a journey and continually learning. We need to not be afraid to evaluate our work and ask ourselves questions such as *“What went well, what could I do differently?”* to not be afraid to make changes afterwards, adapt or to do things differently next time.
10. **Draw on team**. When you are part of team it is important to draw upon each other’s strengths. If you know someone in your team is great at the details, talk them through your plans or if someone is an ideas person or creative bounce ideas around with them. We are not called to work in silos.
11. **Be bold and courageous and step forwards.** When a mistake has been made or something hasn’t gone to plan it could be easy to give up or not want to give it another go – believe me I have been there! However, it is important to have the courage, to draw on your support team and with the boldness and confidence knowing you don’t go alone but God goes with us and before us. If I had given up, I would have missed out on the adventures that God had for me, and as I look back, I can see how those times where it didn’t quite go to plan, God has used that to teach me, grow me, and ultimately learn to lean on him more.