

How To Help Kids Overcome Fear of Failure

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_help_kids_overcome_fear_of_failure

Types of Students

Success Oriented

- love learning for the sake of learning
- see failure as a way to learn

Overstrivers

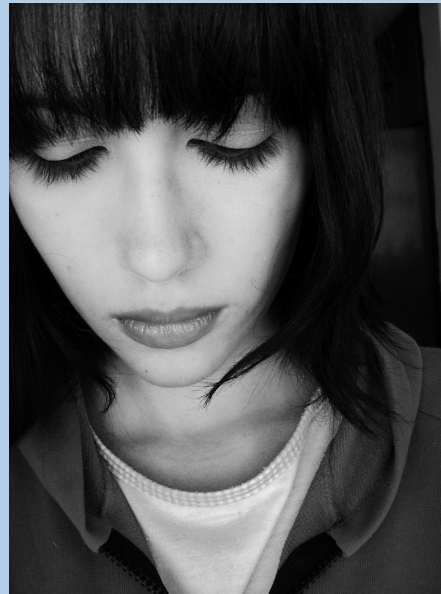
- avoid failure by succeeding by going to a great effort
- motivated by the fear that others will see they're not perfect

Failure Avoiding

- don't expect to succeed, just want to avoid failing
- don't participate, procrastinate, make excuses
- tend to focus on non-academic areas
- tend to believe that parent's love is based on academic success

Failure Accepting

- have internalized failure
- have given up trying to succeed
- ascribe their success to outside circumstances and don't take credit for it
- tend to focus on non-academic areas
- tend to believe that parent's love is based on academic success



Overcoming The Fear

Emphasize Effort over Ability

- give more importance to effort than innate ability
- increasingly important as students get older
- provide specific feedback recognizing and praising effort
- don't tell students to 'try harder' if they are already putting in their best effort

Emphasize Self-Compassion

- teach students that their true value is that they are a caring, conscious human being
- teach students that their self-worth is not based on a category such as academic achievement
- teach students to be compassionate with themselves when they fail
- teach students to practice kind and compassionate 'self-help'
- people who practice self-compassion tend to recover from failure more quickly and are more likely to try new things

Build Positive Relationships

- students are more likely to be motivated to try their best if they have a good relationship with their teacher
- students are less likely to be motivated to try their best if they don't think their teacher cares about them

Note: Understanding that fear of failure is a complex issue, that enables some students to succeed and some students to fail, makes it clear that just telling students to 'toughen up', or 'smarten up', just doesn't work.