

Learning from Success and Failure Session Overview

It takes courage to sit in front of 200+ and talk about the ways in which you have failed. The panelists for “Learning from Success and Failure” were refreshingly candid about their experiences of failure as they shared some of their lessons learned from places as disparate as leading large urban districts, philanthropic work, and founding charter schools. While failure looked different based on the varying situations, the group was in agreement about how to respond to failure. Some of their ideas follow.

- Don’t avoid risk or difficult decisions based on the possibility of failure—try things that move you out of your comfort zone, just make sure you are keenly aware of what you may need to adjust.
- Someone needs to own failures as well as successes. As a leader, you are ultimately responsible for failure and need to own it.
- Experimentation is necessary to find innovative solutions, and failure is an inevitable part of experimentation.



Dan Katzir and Tom Vander Ark speak during the Learning from Success and Failure session at Summit 2011

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