It is Good to Screw Up

How to grow a bigger brain in 10 easy steps, Part 7

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I attended Fast Company's Innovation Uncensored event this week. One of the best sessions was called "Courage and Tenacity in Innovation," but the overriding theme was that one must screw up from time to time in order to innovate.

Every successful entrepreneur or business owner (at least every honest one) has many tales of screw-ups, failed projects, lost money, and even major disasters. One cannot take risks without making mistakes. And innovation can never happen by staying on the safe and predictable road.

When I Googled "common marketing mistakes," more than 1.3 million references popped up. If these mistakes are so common and so easy to find, why do people keep making them? True entrepreneurs and innovators tend to ignore common wisdom and chart their own paths – sometimes with incredibly positive results.

Alex Bogusky of Crispin Porter Bogusky (who was one of the panelists) believes that learning from ones successes is more important than dissecting ones mistakes. But if one totally ignores the factors that contributed to failures, isn't he or she running the risk of repeating them?

That said, the sooner one can dissect a mistake, figure out what went wrong, and vow never to do it again, the greater the chance of future success. By creating a culture where people can feel safe in taking risks and failing, we are ultimately increasing our chances of innovation and progress in the long run.

So, next time you try something and it turns out to be a major flop, pick yourself up, dust off, quickly forgive anyone else who was involved, and get back on the path to creating something fantastic.

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