

Show Me Your Résumé of Failure!

If someone asks to see your resume, you can produce it on demand. You're proud of it, aren't you? You should be. It shows what you've accomplished. It represents your hard work, persistence, and drive. Funny, though, it doesn't show your stumbles, mistakes, detours, unforced errors, or failures. Have you had any?

What's behind your resume? In many ways, you left out the best parts—the crucible experiences that taught you the most. So let's finish the job by writing your resume of failure.

Here's how:

1. Identify the three most spectacular failures of your life, personal or professional. Trying to separate the two is a waste of time, so don't worry about that. Just give us the top three.
2. Write them down. Using clear and concise language, tell us what happened.
3. Explain why you failed in each case. Don't write a dissertation. A quick description with a little context will do.
4. Explain what you learned from each experience. No happy talk. No political spin. Don't pull punches. What's the truth? We all have failures, and sometimes those failures are excruciatingly painful, but this isn't about the pain. This is about the payoff. What gold did you mine from those experiences?

Put it all on one page. Now stand back and be inspired. Your normal resume is clean, bright, and beautiful, casting you in the best possible light. Your resume of failure is dripping with blood, sweat, and tears, revealing the reality of your gritty life.

Smile. Take a breath. Look at what you've accomplished! And if you want to have an unforgettable experience, share your resume of failure with someone you trust.