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# How To Fail At Almost Everything And Still Win Big: Kind Of The Story Of My Life



## Synopsis

Scott Adams has likely failed at more things than anyone you've ever met or anyone you've even heard of. So how did he go from hapless office worker and serial failure to the creator of Dilbert, one of the world's most famous syndicated comic strips, in just a few years? In *How to Fail at Almost Everything and Still Win Big*, Adams shares the strategy he has used since he was a teen to invite failure in, to embrace it, then pick its pocket. No career guide can offer advice for success that works for everyone. As Adams explains, your best bet is to study the ways of others who made it big and try to glean some tricks and strategies that make sense for you. Adams pulls back the covers on his own unusual life and shares what he learned for turning one failure after another into something good and lasting. Adams reveals that he failed at just about everything he's tried, including his corporate career, his inventions, his investments, and his two restaurants. But there's a lot to learn from his personal story, and a lot of humor along the way. While it's hard for anyone to recover from a personal or professional failure, Adams discovered some unlikely truths that helped to propel him forward. For instance: Goals are for losers. Systems are for winners "Passion" is bull. What you need is personal energy A combination of mediocre skills can make you surprisingly valuable You can manage your odds in a way that makes you look lucky to others. You won't find a road map to success in this audiobook. But Adams hopes you can laugh at his failures while discovering some unique and helpful ideas on your own path to personal victory. As he writes: "This is a story of one person's unlikely success within the context of scores of embarrassing failures. Was my eventual success primarily a result of talent, luck, hard work, or an accidental just-right balance of each? All I know for sure is that I pursued a conscious strategy of managing my opportunities in a way that would make it easier for luck to find me."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book was a joy to readHis key ideas are easy to follow because he keeps it simple and Scott Adams writes in a clear and witty mannerFor example the chapter on applying a system vs setting goals and trying to follow them was worth the price of the book many times over for me (and this is reinforced through the book). In his own words goals are a reach-it-and-be-done situation (where you are often waiting to achieve it someday in the future) whereas a system is something you do on a regular or daily basis with a reasonable expectation that doing so will get you to a better place in life. Wanting better health or wanting to lose 10 kg are goals. Being active everyday is a system. One is tied to another - but goals people are fighting the feeling of discouragement at each turn and the systems people are feeling good every-time they apply their system.I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone smart and weary of reading tired cliches in the self-help genre. The book is a breath of fresh air!

I had this pre-ordered after reading the WSJ article. It came yesterday around noon and I finished it at 4:00 AM this morning, with few breaks within that time frame. It wasn't the plan for my day, but I don't regret changing my day around to read this book.I would say any book that holds my interest like that deserves a 5-star rating, though there are a few things that I'd tweak to get it closer to perfection. My official score, being a tough grader, is a 4.6/5.0 and I wouldn't resell it for twice what I paid ... especially now that it's fully highlighted and sticky-noted throughout (which makes the book more valuable to me now because I've identified the portions that spoke directly to me and my own experiences).I really enjoyed Scott's independent thinking and challenges of conventional wisdom throughout this book, especially as it contrasts with other self-help, goal-setting or business advice books. For instance, choosing an opportunity for which one has some sort of inherent advantage rather than blindly prescribing "you can do whatever you want" appeals to my pragmatic mind. I have wrestled with this exact conclusion within the past year as I work through my own list of new ideas and opportunities, so I enjoyed that perspective as it resonates with my own thinking.I really enjoyed the thinking on pg. 40, which is fully highlighted, less perhaps a couple sentences. This is where Scott talks about his mental model of not wanting to sell his time due to limited upside and finding a product that is infinitely scalable. I appreciated this candidness, which allows the reader to

better understand the later "luck" and apparent rapid success of Dilbert. It's clear to me, Scott's success was a lifetime in the making, the product of continued experimentation and the tenacity to stay at it. This whole book was helpful to me, as my model is exactly the same and the road to success is anything but certain when you're placing bets on what the public wants. Having a system that embraces and anticipates failure, in particular, is an essential tool to avoid letting temporary results bleed over into derailing what could be a highly successful longer-term career choice. Pg. 88, talking about when to quit and how successful ventures often have SOME element of success early-on also resonated with me, and is another page that is more yellow than white after reading this book. These comments also directly resonated with some false-starts I've had, where I correctly pulled the plug after minimal investment of time because things just did not feel right almost from the get-go. I felt poorly about pulling the red handle so early while I was ejecting, but now looking back I know I was practicing the exact type of discipline one needs to practice when trying totally new things. Plan on a good chunk of your initial tests, ideas and hypotheses being off the mark and blindly plowing time and effort at soft-starts is a recipe for disaster. One of my favorite quotes in the book is "Persistence is useful, but there's no point in being an idiot about it." That got a "lol!" I also appreciated Scott's thoughts on useful core skills, especially psychology. This topic has become more and more interesting to me after sluffing through Pscych 202 in college, when it seems like a diversion from more useful topics. I now see how important that is, and also how little I know in this universe of knowledge. The terms page of psychological topics is a lifetime of potential study in itself, so the book leads you to new domains of study if you so choose. Scott urges the reader to not accept anything at face value, and my personal model embraces a good chunk of this body of wisdom with a few of my own twists. Any book that holds your interest and gives you new things to think about is worth owning and reading, in my opinion. This book satisfies that criteria with ease. Thank you for writing it and good luck with the book.

This is a solid book with useful advice for everyone. Unfortunately, though, it drops the ball on the central premise of the book: Goals Are Bad vs. Systems Are Good. After finishing this book I was left with a lot of questions about Systems:- What are they exactly?- What are the components of a good system (do's and don'ts)?- How are they different than a project? While I understand that it can be a bit subjective, it would've been helpful if Scott spelled out "For Idiots" some of his systems. He alludes to them in the last bit about staying active, where his system allows "slippage". Again, having more visibility into the specifics of one or more of his systems (real or hypothetical examples) with some detail behind it would have made the book much better. At issue is while I accept the

premise that Systems are Better than Goals, I've got no clarity on how to go about setting up systems for myself. That was the big disappointment with the book. Otherwise it's plenty entertaining, and certainly gets to second or third base, but sadly isn't a home run. I plan to copy / paste this into a tweet for @ScottAdamsSays (who is well worth following) in the hopes that he can direct me to some blog posts or respond to my question about.

I would give this 3 and a half stars but doesn't let me do that so I rounded up. I purchased this book after reading a random infographic titled: "Most Important books for young engineers" and me, being a young engineer, immediately went and snapped this up. After all I like Dilbert, why wouldn't I like this book. As it turned out my thought process worked out, I did enjoy the book. The best parts of the book were Adam's own failures and experiences. If this had been simply a biography of Adam's life I believe I would have enjoyed this even more than I did. The problem is, Adam's also throws a whole slew of life advice into the book, some of it is good advice, some it is not so good, some is boring and some is interesting. To get to the interesting bits you have to battle through 5 chapters of Adam's explaining systems and then telling you not to listen to him because he is a cartoonist. He teases his speaking disorder, which I thought would be a very interesting experience, throughout the entire book and then sums up the treatment in 2 chapters at the end. The entire speaking disorder experiences lasts less than 15 pages. It seems to me that Adam's didn't have a full book's worth of material and simply began throwing random ideas at the wall. This is why there are 1 page chapters about how you reading the book already changed your life. All this being said, the book is still an enjoyable read and I would recommend it for anyone entering the workforce, not just young engineers.

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