



*Personal*  
& **AUTHENTIC**

CHAPTER 7

Tom shares a story of a pro athlete that didn't "measure up" by the standard assessments that are used to define future success in his field. However, years later, he's known as one of the best to have ever played.

**Without breaking any confidentiality, reflect on and describe a student that didn't perform well on standard metrics, but had the skills needed to thrive in life?**

**How did that child's perseverance and resilience lead to their success?**

**How did you support them in the process?**

**How do you model perseverance and  
resilience to those around you?**

**What personal and authentic learning experiences do you  
oversee that promote the growth of these life skills?**

**Have you ever felt like you weren't modeling  
what you asked your students or staff to do?  
How did you remedy the situation?**

**When's the last time you failed forward?  
How were you impacted by the experience?  
If at school, how were your students affected?**

**Tom shares many examples of people that failed in their career, only to become household names down the road. Besides these well-known examples, who inspires you to fail forward? Who needs that same inspiration from you?**

Tom writes how

“

Moments of uncertainty create opportunities for your leadership legacy. Failing forward with perseverance disciplines our own expectations, pushes us to keep trying, and ultimately empowers us to lead from within. It is your display of humility in the best of times and your fail-forward mindset and perseverance during the difficult times that will make those around you want to follow.

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How do you model this type of mindset to those around you?



**(Personal Reflection) Teachers: Which student in your classroom is discouraged and needs additional support to fail forward? How will you support him/her?**

**-or-**

**Administrators: Which person on your staff is discouraged and needs additional support to fail forward? How will you support him/her?**

**What's something recently that you've  
had to unlearn and then relearn?  
What emotions did you feel in that process?  
What type of growth occurred?**

**Every educator works to help students own their learning.  
How do you model that to students in your role?**

**How can you help students develop both agency and empathy? How do you model empathy in your daily interactions with those around you?**

**Tom shares another story that has impacted his life about an interaction he had with Gus, a professional shoeshiner.**

**Do you know a personal and authentic person like Gus?**

**What lessons does that person model of how to be an incredible educator?**

**What is it that gives you hope as an educator?  
What hope do you have for your students and  
those who serve kids alongside you each day?  
Do they know you feel that way?**

**What's next for you?**  
**What is it that you commit to do to  
continue to move this work forward?**  
**What steps will you take?**