

So You Made a Mistake?

When I first got into the newspaper business – lo, all those years ago! – my assignments included a variety of tasks handed to most new reporters, including writing or rewriting obituaries. And across the years, that meant many of them.

So I relate well to a story about the obituary editor of a city newspaper who was not one who could admit his mistakes easily. One day, he got a phone call from an irate subscriber who complained that her name just appeared in the obituary column.

“Really?” was the editor’s calm reply. “Where are you calling from?”

Of course, there is no shame in making mistakes. They are an important and necessary part of learning, such as ...

A young man came in for an interview with his manager. “Tell me,” the young man asked her, “how did you become successful?”

“Two words,” she said. “Right decisions.”

He asked, “How did you make right decisions?”

“One word,” she replied: “Experience.”

“And how did you get experience?” the young man pressed her.

“Two words,” she said. “Wrong decisions.”



There is wisdom in that conversation. In order to profit from our mistakes, we have to get out and make some.

Steve Goodier, an ordained United Methodist minister and author of numerous books about personal development, motivation and making needed life changes, said that so long as we keep making different mistakes each time, we’re learning and growing.

Goodier referred to a speech entertainer Conan O’Brien made to a graduating class in 2000 about some wisdom he gleaned in life. He told them that he wished the best for them. But then he said something interesting. O’Brien wished for them that they experience plenty of the bad as well as the good.

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“Fall down,” O’Brien said. “Make a mess. Break something occasionally. Know that your mistakes are your own unique way of getting to where you need to be. And remember that the story is never over.”

About O’Brien’s advice, Goodier added: “Are you feeling badly about a mistake you recently made? Then decide what you will do differently next time, make amends if necessary, and move on.”

So what’s the lesson for us in our personal lives and in the work we are called to do in Life Care and Century Park? If you are afraid of taking a necessary risk for fear of making a mistake, just remember that even poor choices are opportunities to learn. How else are you going to learn to make better ones?



As mistakes happen – and they will – keep in mind that they will make you better.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter