

Failure will happen.
It's what you do with it that counts.

Succeed Sooner by Failing Better

Social Venture Partners Denver

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Today's Session

- Failure, the Reality and How We Waste It
- Good vs. Bad Failures
- Failure Mapping (Activity)
- Fail Better Method
- SVP Denver Case Study
- Project-Based Application (Activity)
- Mindset & Skills
- Q & A

Failure triggers learning. Or does it?
Think of a time...



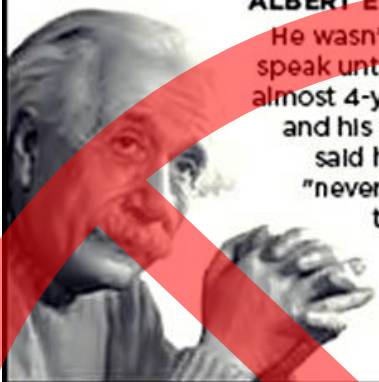


HARD-WIRED

CULTURE

OUTSIDE FACTORS

FAMOUS FAILURES



ALBERT EINSTEIN

He wasn't able to speak until he was almost 4-years-old and his teachers said he would "never amount to much"



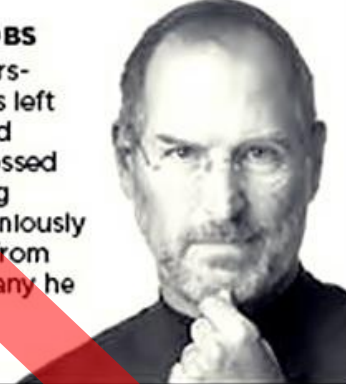
MICHAEL JORDAN

After being cut from his high school basketball team, he went home, locked himself in his room, and cried.



WALT DISNEY

Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas."



STEVE JOBS

At 30-years-old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started.



OPRAH WINFREY

Was demoted from her job as a news anchor because she "wasn't fit for television."



THE BEATLES

Rejected by Decca Recording Studios, who said "We don't like their sound—they have no future in show business."

X



Preventable:

Predictable activities

Unavoidable:

Complex systems

Intentional:

Failures at the frontier

Where do most of your failures fall?

Failure Mapping Activity

DEVIANCE

An individual chooses to violate a prescribed process or practice.

INATTENTION

An individual inadvertently deviates from specifications.

LACK OF ABILITY

An individual doesn't have the skills, conditions, or training to execute a job.

PROCESS

INADEQUACY

A competent individual adheres to a prescribed but faulty or incomplete process.

TASK CHALLENGE

An individual faces a task too difficult to be executed reliably every time.

PROCESS

COMPLEXITY

A process composed of many elements breaks down when it encounters novel interactions.

UNCERTAINTY

A lack of clarity about future events causes people to take seemingly reasonable actions that produce undesired results.

HYPOTHESIS

TESTING

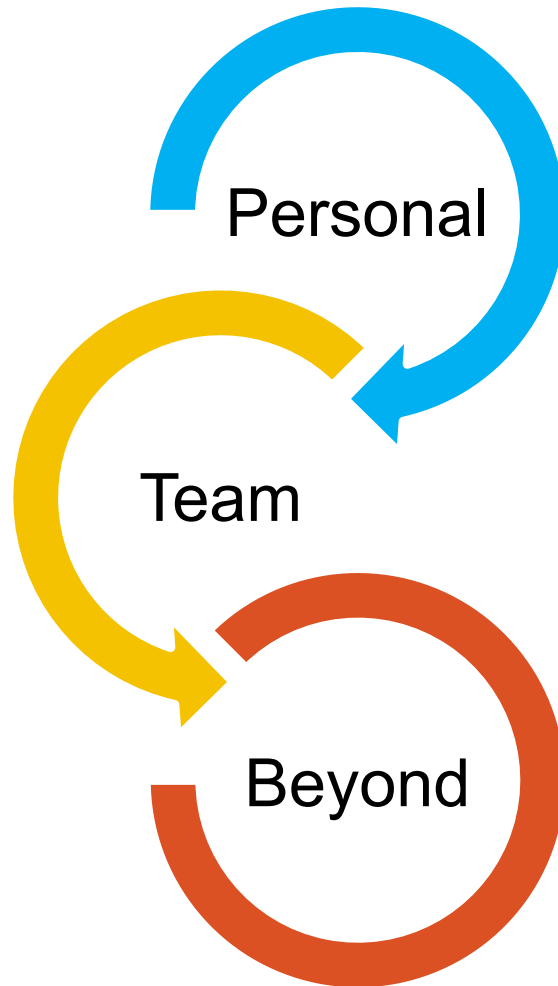
An experiment conducted to prove that an idea or a design will succeed fails.

EXPLORATORY

TESTING

An experiment conducted to expand knowledge and investigate a possibility leads to an undesired result.

Learning at 3 Levels



Launch

Iterate

Embed



LAUNCH

- **Link actions to outcomes**
- **Marshall your resources**
- **Build your team**



Launch Tools

- Logic Models
- Theory of Change
- Causal Maps
- Stakeholder Input



Actions to Outcomes

- Resource Inventory
- Stakeholder Map
- Budget



Marshal Resources

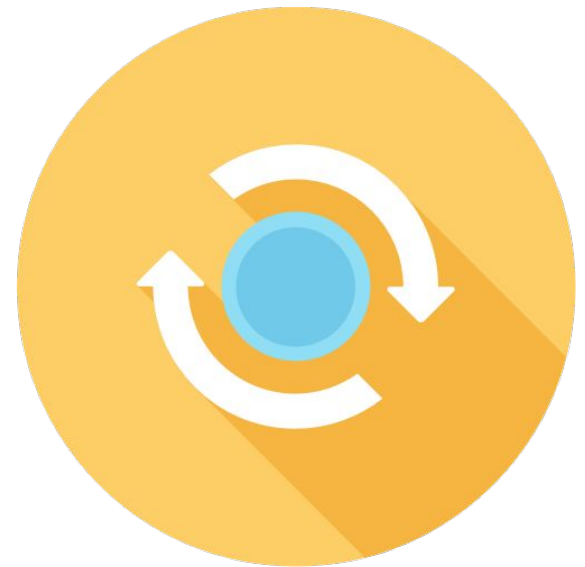
- Skills Inventory
- Team Roster
- Working Agreement
- Ground Rules



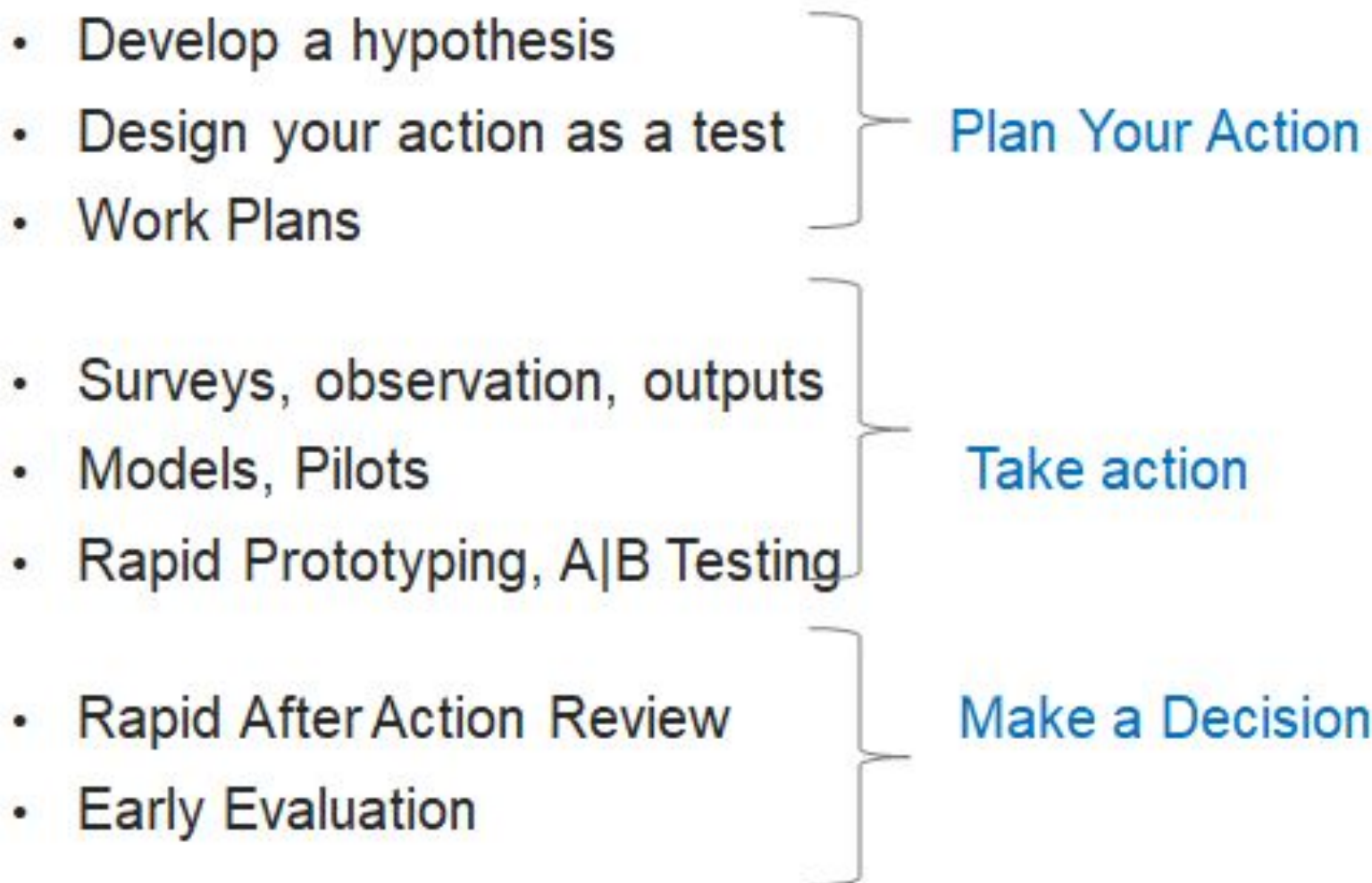
Build Your Team

ITERATE

- **Plan your action**
- **Take action**
- **Make a decision**



Iterate Tools



EMBED

- **Examine your Results**
- **Enhance your practices**
- **Share your discoveries**



Embed Tools

- Project Archive
- Evaluation Briefs
- After Action Review
- Logic Model Review

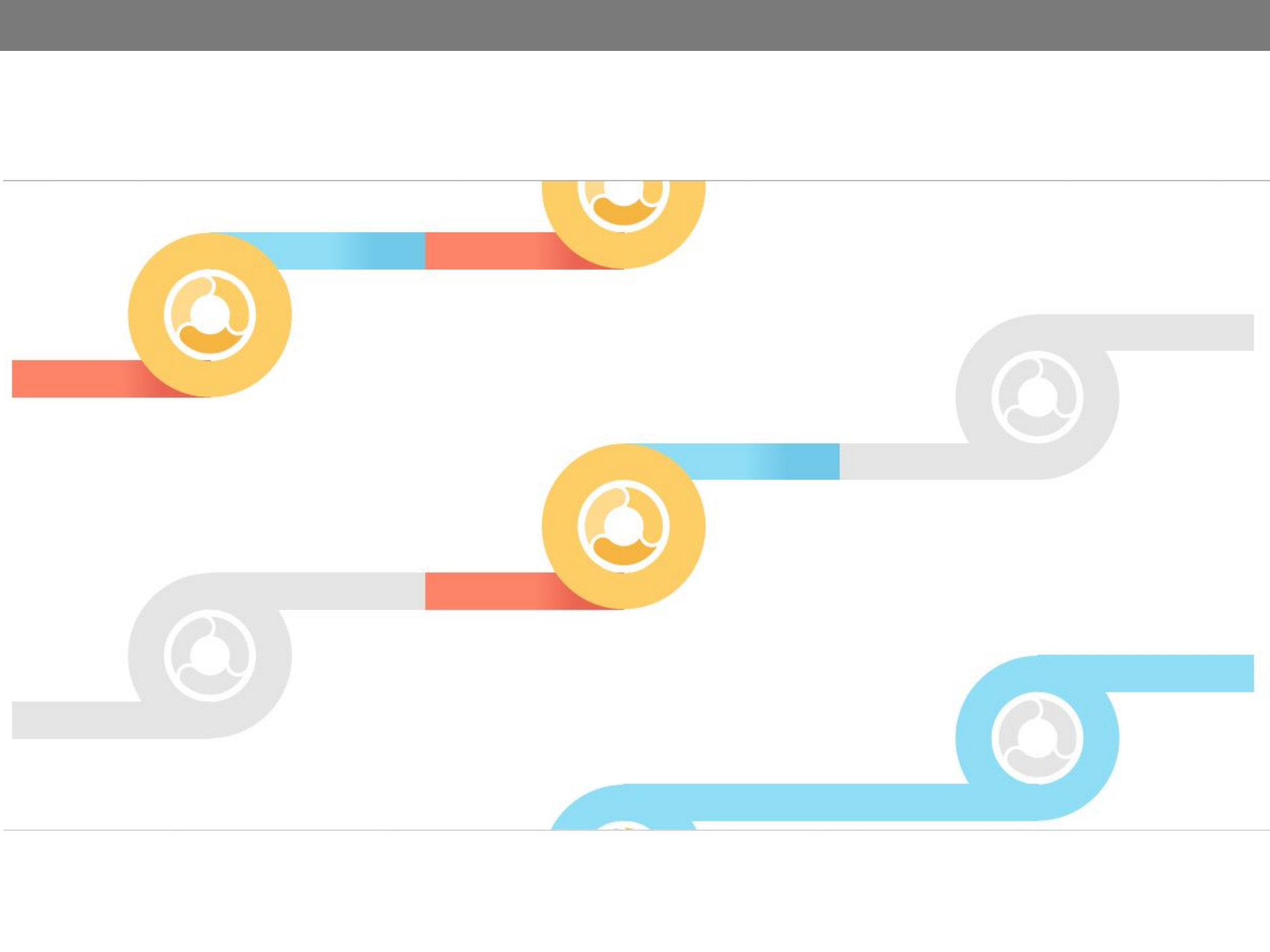
Examine Your Results

- 360 Review
- Team Brainstorm
- Accountability Partner

Enhance Your Practices

- Case Studies
- Learning Circles
- Social Media
- Newsletters
- Publications

Share Your Discoveries



practical tools on failbetternow.com



Fail Better Checklist #8: Enhance Your Practices

Taking into account the quality of your project's four performance dimensions, this checklist will help you identify the practices that contributed to your outcomes. Your goal is to figure out what to change, what to add, and what to retain.

1. Build better team habits

- ☐ Design a special team meeting to assess team processes.
- ☐ Review your timeline and scorecard with the team to set the stage.
- ☐ Working as a team, list the habits or practices to retain and to discard. Identify other practices that could be helpful to try in the future to remedy a negative experience in the current project.
- ☐ Document the list of retain/ add/ drop/ change items and share it with the team. Determine an action plan for how the team can be accountable to the list.

2. Enhance project methods

- ☐ Identify specific tools or methods that helped or hindered project results. This may be a test that was particularly illuminating or a way of sharing data.
- ☐ Determine and document which methods you would like to try again or expand in future projects and which you want to avoid due to their poor outcomes.

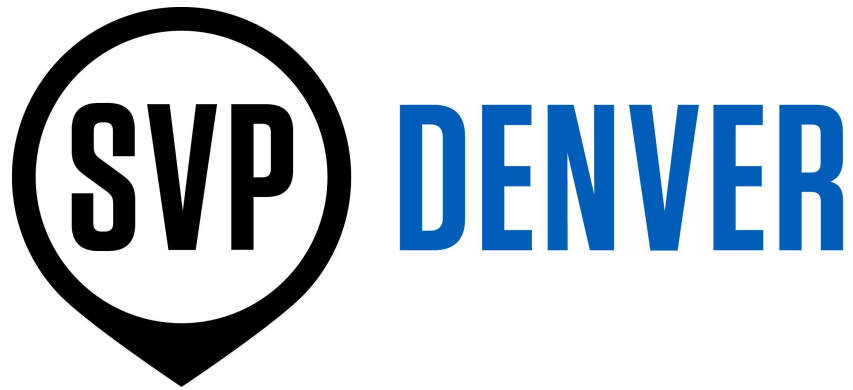
3. Update your own management practice

- ☐ Examine your own experience and personal performance by asking the same questions— what habits and practices did you engage in as manager that should be retained or dropped? Supplement your own reflection with feedback from others.
- ☐ Select your top priorities by considering what's most needed along with what's most feasible.
- ☐ Create your own action plan that includes specific steps and a plan for assessing if you've improved in a specific area. Share your action plan with a mentor or trusted peer who can help keep you accountable to your goals.

RESULTS

- Affordable risk-taking and scope for failure
- Finding and communicating value in mistakes
- Innovation and experimentation
- Forming a habit of continuous improvement

Case Study: SVP Denver's Cohort Model



Cohort Model: What is it?

WHO?

- One lead partner who leads series of workshops on a specific topic
- Four to six nonprofit or social ventures in target Issue Areas with a specific capacity building need (Theory of Change, Pitch, Evaluation)
- 1:1 partner coach matched with each organization to support and guide them through the process

WHAT?

- Series of 4-6 workshops, led by expert(s) in the field or lead partner who has been through cohort before
- Homework in between workshops, completed with partner coach's feedback and support

OUTCOME:

- Nonprofits/social ventures create impactful final deliverable (e.g., Theory of Change, pitch deck, etc.) that enable them to scale their impact in the community

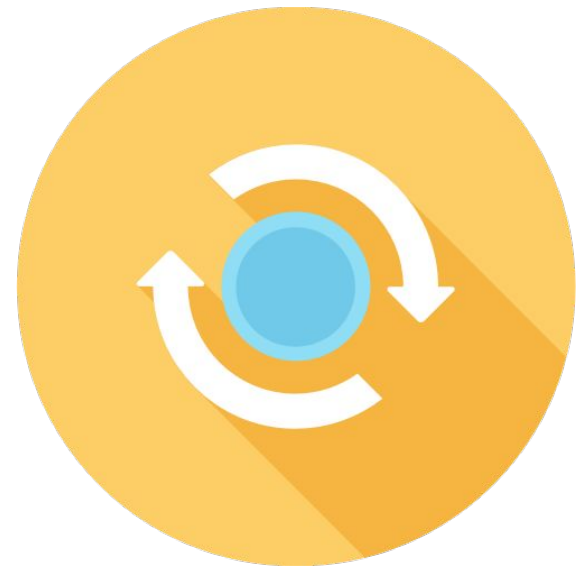
LAUNCH

- **Challenge:**
 - Scale programming to reach more nonprofits
 - Provide engagement + community building learning opportunities for nonprofits + **SVP Coaches**
 - **Develop curriculum, recruit participants, + launch!**
-



ITERATE

- **Implement program based on initial design**
 - **Conduct evaluation + receive participant feedback**
 - **Identify areas to incorporate program improvement**
(ex: increase connection and sense of community between participants)
 - **Balance refining existing programs + developing new programming and appropriate combination + frequency**
-



EMBED

- Share learnings with key stakeholders
 - Incorporate learnings into subsequent cohort programming
-



APPLICATION

Growth Mindset

Design for Learning



Cultivate Mindset & Skills

Talk About Failure

Champion Smart Risk

CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET

- Fixed vs. Growth
- Educational system tends to reinforce fixed
- Growth mindset = key to resilience

FAMOUS FAILURES	
 <p>ALBERT EINSTEIN He wasn't able to speak until he was almost 4-years-old and his teachers said he would "never amount to much."</p>	 <p>MICHAEL JORDAN After being cut from his high school basketball team, he went home, locked himself in his room, and cried.</p>
 <p>WALT DISNEY Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas."</p>	 <p>STEVE JOBS At 30-years-old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started.</p>

*It's up
to you!*



FIXED MINDSET

Belief that my intelligence, personality and character are carved in stone; my potential is determined at birth



GROWTH MINDSET

Belief that my intelligence, personality and character can be developed! A person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable).

DESIRE	Look smart in every situation and prove myself over and over again. Never fail!!	Stretch myself, take risks and learn. Bring on the challenges!
EVALUATION OF SITUATIONS	Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb?	Will this allow me to grow? Will this help me overcome some of my challenges?
DEALING WITH SETBACKS	"I'm a failure" (identity) "I'm an idiot"	"I failed" (action) "I'll try harder next time"
CHALLENGES	Avoid challenges, get defensive or give up easily.	Embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks.
EFFORT	Why bother? It's not going to change anything.	Growth and learning require effort.
CRITICISM	Ignore constructive criticism.	Learn from criticism. How can I improve?
SUCCESS OF OTHERS	Feel threatened by the success of others. If you succeed, then I fail.	Finds lessons & inspiration in other people's success.
RESULT...	Plateau early, achieve less than my full potential.	Reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

DESIGN FOR LEARNING

- Create **small challenges** that stretch and grow team members
- **Pair freedom and safety** to support varied, creative action
- **Provide/ seek feedback** that is timely, specific and directional



TALK ABOUT FAILURE

- **Define expectations** up front– use spectrum
- **Defend** the good failures, **correct** the bad ones
- **Model the behavior** you want– be vulnerable
- **Practice talking about failure**

90 second stories

- Set the stage
- Key challenge / outcome
- What do you want your audience to take away

CELEBRATE RISK-TAKING

- **Define the sandbox** at outset– what risk can we take?
- **Champion innovations** at the frontier
- Treat successes and good failures **the same**



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It's what you do with it that counts.

Questions?

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