Did you know …?

- Thomas Edison failed more than 900 times before he perfected the light bulb.
- Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times.
- A mistake by a factory worker who let the stirrer run too long in a soap vat led to the invention of Ivory soap.
- Post-it Notes were a result of a failed batch of glue that was supposed to be extra-strong, but turned out to be very weak.
- Michael Jordan missed more than 9,000 shots. Twenty-six times he missed the game-winning shots.
- In the Beatles’ first record audition with Decca Recording they were told, “We don’t like your sound, groups of guitars are on their way out.”
- In 1944, Norma Jean Baker, after reporting to a modeling agency, was told you better learn secretarial work or else get married. She went on and became Marilyn Monroe.
- In 1954, Jimmy Denny, manager of the Grand Ole Opry fired a singer after one performance. He told him, "You ain't goin' nowhere son. You ought to go back to drivin' a truck." Elvis Presley went on to become the most popular singer in America.
- When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, it did not ring off the hook with calls from potential backers. After making a demonstration call, President Rutherford Hayes said, "That's an amazing invention, but who would ever want to use one of them?"
- In the 1940s, another young inventor named Chester Carlson took his idea to twenty corporations, including some of the biggest in the country. They all turned him down. In 1947—after seven long years of rejections—he finally got a tiny company in Rochester, New York, the Haloid Company, to purchase the rights to his invention, an electrostatic paper-copying process. Haloid became the Xerox Corporation we know today.
Wilma Rudolph was the twentieth of 22 children. She was born prematurely and her survival was doubtful. When she was four years old, she contracted double pneumonia and scarlet fever, which left her with a paralyzed left leg. At age nine, she removed the metal leg brace she had been dependent on and began to walk without it. By thirteen she had developed rhythmic walk, which doctors said was a miracle. That same year she decided to become a runner. She entered a race and came in last. For the next few years every race she entered, she came in last. Everyone told her to quit, but she kept on running. One day she actually won a race. And then another. From then on she won every race she entered. Eventually this little girl, who was told she would never walk again, went on to become the first American woman to win three gold medals in track and field during a single Olympic Games.

Ask students to take turns reading the facts out loud to the class. You may want to repeat “Did you know …?” before each fact is read.

Facilitate a discussion around the facts, asking …

What are your thoughts, feelings and connections?

How would our world be different if these people hadn’t persevered?

We’ve failed many times and used the feedback to lead us to success, although we may not remember it. We fell down the first time we tried to walk. We struggled the first time we tried to swim. Did we hit the ball the first time we swung a bat? Probably not, but we kept trying. Success happens when we take the feedback we receive and apply it. Sometimes feedback comes in the wrapper of a failure.

Share a brief personal story about a time you learned from a failure and succeeded in the end.

Think of a time when you have learned from your mistakes. How did you have the courage to keep trying? Turn to a neighbor and share your thoughts and feelings about that time.

What happens when we do something and it doesn’t work out as we had planned? Maybe we get an “F” on a paper. Maybe we get fired from a job. What happens if we just stick the paper in the drawer, or just walk out the door at the job? Does that help us be more successful on that next paper? Does that help us keep that next job?

Elicit responses.
Senior Level

KEY LESSON – FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS

In order for our failures to lead us to success in the future, we consider them feedback. We look for the lessons that failure gives us and apply them next time we try.

The only time a person fails is when he or she stops trying. The fact that a person fails doesn’t mean that he or she is a failure. It only means that the person didn’t reach their goal at a particular time. Failure can build character, perseverance, ambition, drive, patience, and faith. Turning failure into success builds satisfaction, self-confidence, and fulfillment. Failure is never final! It is one step on the path to success! Failure can be turned into great things, or can lead to great things. Don’t worry about failure, worry about the chances you miss when you don’t even try. (Excerpt based on a message published in the Wall Street Journal by United Technologies Corporation, appearing in Chicken Soup for the Soul.)

Our Key this month is Failure Leads to Success. (Review the body motion.)

demonstrate

Consider a time in your life that you really succeeded. Now think of everything that preceded that success. If you succeeded in winning an election at school, maybe you lost one in the past, and learned from it. If you succeeded in making a trustworthy friend, you may have done so after learning from feedback, for example, the disadvantages of having an untrustworthy friend.

Have students write, “A time that I eventually experienced success after learning from a failure was …”

Give students their journal page as a reflection of the Key.

review

If using KeyCards, present them to students and have them hold the cards Key side up to do a callback and review with you. (If not using KeyCards, do the callback and review with whatever visuals you choose for the introduction of the Key.)

The Key for this month is …

Elicit FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS—loud and clear!

And what does Failure Leads to Success mean?

Read definition with students. Then ask them to turn their KeyCards to the other side.
What do you say to yourself? Let's all read the words in white.

*Read affirmation with students.*

*Review the body motion.*

**celebrate**

Now let's high-five all around the classroom to celebrate learning about another one of the 8 Keys of Excellence—FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS. *(Optional: Have the students repeat the affirmation as they high-five their classmates.)*

*Or create your own class celebration.*