



Penn Arts & Sciences  
East Asian Languages and Civilizations



賓大中文

## Mental Health Wellness 2023 Series #8

### *Part 2: Mastering Failure To Make It Work For You: Hands-On Tools & Exercises*

**October 11, 2023**

Sponsored by the Matthew Y Wang Memorial Fund

# Alumni Speaker Introduction



Alice Yeh, WG'14 G'14

Alice Yeh is a certified Life & Career Fulfillment Coach, helping high-achieving working professionals take calculated risks to break free from the same old boring routine and lead more fulfilled, balanced, meaningful, and happier lives.

She left the corporate world to pursue entrepreneurship after 15+ years of combined experience at J.P. Morgan, Google, and early and late-stage startups including working as an expat in Hong Kong, London, and Singapore.

Alice takes a more holistic vision of life and made life choices accordingly such as taking a yearlong sabbatical to travel and follow personal passions like starting a travel blog, learning Spanish, yoga teacher training, and Reiki Level 2 certification.

# Alumni Speaker Introduction



Atthena Breiton, W'08

Atthena is a yoga & meditation teacher, pain & injury healer, and wellness advocate.

She was a former investment banker and venture capital / growth equity investor before she left the corporate world in 2015 and started her own business.

Atthena is a Yoga Alliance E-RYT 500 and Continuing Education Provider, and her clients include Ernst & Young, HSBC, U.S. Bank, GAP Inc., and Facebook (Meta).

She is passionate about personal development and has learned from some of the most reputable and seasoned life coaches around the country.

# Recap of this afternoon's session

## **Failure is...**

1. Totally normal
2. Necessary for growth
3. An important component to achieving success

# Key Takeaways

1. Impossible not to fail; it's what we do after we fail that's important
2. When we fail, we learn and gain invaluable knowledge and experience
3. Failing is all part of the process
4. **Key is to not let failure stop you – just keep going!**

*Practical tools to help you work through failure and overcome the fear of failure so that you can reach your goals.*

***We must address our feelings.***

***Let Yourself Feel Bad.  
Don't try to shove down your  
emotions and feelings.***



**Tool #1: Journaling Exercise –  
Processing Your Feelings**

***Think of a recent or significant incident that happened that you would consider a failure.***

# *Prompt #1 - Letting it All Out*

*What happened? How do you feel?  
What are the thoughts running  
through your head? What are you  
scared about? (5 min)*

Example: I got a C on my computer programming midterm. I feel so so so bad and so stupid! My parents are going to kill me. I'm so scared they're going to yell at me and disown me. I feel like I'm letting them down. I'm scared I'm going to fail this class.

## *Prompt #2 - Reflection*

*What knowledge have you gained from this experience? What are you going to do going forward? How are you going to help your worries? (4 min)*

*Example: I realized the way I studied during high school doesn't work in college! I'm going to meet with the TA and go to weekly office hours. My friend got an A on the exam, and I'm going to ask if I can study with him. I didn't sleep well the night before because my roommate had the lights on and was playing music. I'm going to ask my roommate to turn off the lights by midnight and put his headphones in so I can get a good night's sleep and sleep for at least 8 hours.*

*I'm going to tell my parents that I got a C but that I have an action plan going forward.*

## *Prompt #3 – Positivity*

*Make a list and write at least 5 things that you like about yourself. (2 min)*

*Finish this sentence...*

**What I like about myself is...**

*Example:*

1. I'm smart
2. I have the ability to execute anything I put my mind to
3. I'm really caring
4. I'm creative
5. I'm a really good cook!

## *Prompt #4 - Affirmation*

*Write an affirmation statement(s) about yourself that reminds you why you are remarkable. (2 min)*

Example: I am remarkable because I am healthy, caring, and smart. I love how my mind works. I love my determination and ability to execute anything I put my mind to. I love how creative I am, especially in cooking!

I am going to do better for my final, and I can overcome anything!

“

**Don't ever doubt yourself or believe you don't have what it takes. You do. You have amazing qualities no one else possesses.**

*~ Barrie Davenport*

## *Tool #2: Rejection Exercise*

# Purpose of Rejection Exercise

1. Get used to feeling uncomfortable; get used to being told no
2. Sit with the uncomfortable sensation but then realize that you are still safe
3. Each rejection makes you stronger and increases your resilience





**You miss 100%  
of the shots you  
don't take.**

**Wayne Gretzky**

# Rejection Exercise (3 min)

1. Make a list of 5 things you will do to put yourself out there and / or ask for
2. Next to each item, put a day / when you will plan to do it

## Examples:

1. Ask a complete stranger to buy you a sandwich (tomorrow)
2. Ask for a free refill at a restaurant (Friday)
3. Ask your friend if you can have \$5 (next time I see him / her)



You gain strength, courage  
and confidence by every  
experience in which you  
really stop to look fear in the  
face. You are able to say to  
yourself, 'I have lived through  
this horror. I can take the next  
thing that comes along.'

Eleanor Roosevelt

(YOU LEARN BY LIVING, 1960)

*Challenge: At the end of each month, reflect on your “failures” or how your rejection exercise went. Create another list for the upcoming month.*

## *Tool #3: Desire Exercise*

Write your biggest desires that you are afraid to go for.  
(3 min)

Example:

1. Trying out for Strictly Funk

1. To change majors / schools (i.e. from biology to psychology)

1. To ask out my crush

# Under each desire, write what you are afraid of. (4 min)

## 1. Trying out for Strictly Funk

- I won't make it and others will know I didn't make it (fear of judgment)

## 2. To change majors / schools

- My parents won't agree
- I'll have wasted all the credits I already took to pursue my current major
- I may need to stay another semester or year

## 3. To ask out my crush

- S/he might say no, and then I'll be really hurt
- They may reject me in a mean manner and/or they laugh at me
- Being judged by others

*Now imagine the scenario where it worked out, what would be the benefits?*



# What if it worked out? What are the benefits? (5 min)

## 1. Trying out for Strictly Funk

- I gain a new group of friends
- I continue my interest in dancing and increase my stage presence
- I become a better dancer and have a lot of fun

## 2. To change majors / schools

- I'll stop being miserable and will actually be happy studying something I enjoy
- I can turn my current major into a minor
- I finally share my heart with my parents and feel closer to them

## 3. To ask out my crush

- S/he says yes, and I'm so happy!
- They end up being "the one"
- I won't live in regret and always wonder "what if"; I'll stop overthinking



Limitations live  
only in our minds.  
But if we use our  
imaginations, our  
possibilities  
become limitless.

*Jamie Paolinetti*

## *Tool #4: Writing a Letter to Yourself*

*Think of another failure you experienced or use the one you chose in Exercise #1.*

*Imagine that your best friend or someone you love went through this exact failure.*

*Write a short letter to that person.  
What would you say to them?  
How would you encourage them to  
move forward?*

# Writing a Letter to Yourself (5 min)

*Incident: Not getting the internship you really wanted.*

Dear Best Friend,

It's ok that you didn't get that internship. It's not the end of the world. You're still an amazing and gifted person! You are creative, caring, kind, and smart. You're healthy. There are plenty of other opportunities available where you can shine. You will find a place where your talents will be appreciated. You still have time to look for another internship. You're meant for better things! You will get through this. Don't let this stop you from achieving your dreams. Remember you are loved and supported by others. Don't hesitate to ask for help.

Love,

*Now read it back and direct it to  
yourself. (3 min)*

*How do you feel?*



*Repeat this exercise anytime you are  
feeling down about yourself.*

**Tool #5: Give yourself a hug**

*I love my body.*

*I love my heart.*

*I love my mind.*

*I love my soul.*

*I love myself.*

*Thank you for this life.*

# Summary and Key Exercises

1. Let yourself feel bad – it's totally normal. Don't bottle up your emotions. Feel your feelings and process your emotions.  
*(Journaling)*
1. Don't be afraid of rejection; get used to putting yourself out there. Overcome your fear of failure. *(Rejection Exercise)*
1. Let yourself dream and reach for your goals. *(Desire Exercise)*
  - Think about the best case outcomes that can happen. The benefits and potential are limitless.

# Summary and Key Exercises (cont'd)

4. We are our own worst critics. It's important to treat ourselves the way we would treat others. Show ourselves some compassion.  
*(Writing a Letter to Yourself)*
5. Comfort and give yourself some self-love. *(Give yourself a hug)*

*Most successful people do not let failures define them. They let their reactions to failures define themselves.*

# Simu Liu



**Q&A**



# *Connect with Us*



**Alice Yeh, WG'14 G'14**

[linkedin.com/in/aliceyeh/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/aliceyeh/)

IG: @heyaliceyeh

[alice@aliceyehcoaching.com](mailto:alice@aliceyehcoaching.com)



**Atthena Breitton, W'08**

[linkedin.com/in/atthenabreitton/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/atthenabreitton/)

[www.atthenahealing.com](http://www.atthenahealing.com)

[hello@atthenahealing.com](mailto:hello@atthenahealing.com)