

The power of celebrating your failure and success

By Leigh Andrews

27 Aug 2018

It may be an unconventional topic, but the speakers at Future Females' August 2018 monthly event all spoke on 'how to fail successfully'. Here's why entrepreneurs, in particular, can benefit from embracing when things don't go quite to plan.



The Future Females founding members.

The Future Females group celebrated their first birthday at Workshop 17 at the V&A Waterfront on Wednesday, 22 August. Turn out was amazing, with the space absolutely packed with males and females alike, because while the group is pro-women, it's definitely not anti-anything.

In fact, it was so full that when I got up to grab a Zang caffeinated chocolate from the back of the room to keep going, my seat vanished and I had to make do with a comfy corduroy beanbag chair or stand at the gin bar. And that's just the people who arrived on time.

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#FUTUREFEMALES UNITE! 💎💎 | @workshop17za is absolutely jampacked this evening for the @futurefemales first birthday celebration. 💎💎 Congrats @lauren.dallas @cerinabzd @philippadods and the rest of the team! Whoop whoop, I'll be standing in the back! 💎💎

A post shared by Leigh Andrews (@ramblinglitchi123) on Aug 22, 2018 at 9:41am PDT

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I felt especially sorry for the latecomers, because by the time we reached the event's designated start time of 18:30, clean glasses were a rare find and all the mini burgers, eggy parcels, crisp *spanakopita* and melba toast bites were long gone. Luckily there was still lots of liquid refreshment, the glasses were restocked and there was also a delicious cake for later.



Dallas and Bezuidenhout telling their story.

But I digress, the deliciousness of the evening wasn't limited to the food and drink. Co-founders Cerina Bezuidenhout and Lauren Dallas also kicked off the special version of their monthly event with food for thought, by explaining that they'd conducted research on the Future Females members and found they don't celebrate their own failures enough - that may sound odd but bear with me, it makes sense!

As a result, they began their first birthday celebrations by giving us all a taste of what's gone on 'under the hood' these past 12 months.



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Many don't realise that Bezuidenhout and Dallas met just a year ago, as they're so good at bouncing the conversation off each other. They also listen to the communities they've built, often asking for their input and experiences.

For example, the 10 Future Females communities across the globe were asked how they had benefitted over the past year, with key responses pointing out the excellent sense of collaboration and gathering both online and offline, realising you're not alone out there in your entrepreneurial journey.

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#hustle #startups #push #motivation

A post shared by [Bevan Nel](#) (@bevan.nel) on Aug 12, 2018 at 12:36pm PDT

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The video responses shown all featured different accents, which goes to show how Future Females gives local entrepreneurs the opportunity to expand globally.

Bezuidenhout and Dallas said it's necessary to have a few failures to learn from when looking back at their journey, which is why they reflected beyond just the positive. Their main speaker for the evening did the same.

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We don't speak enough about failure , or how many successes have come from one failing repetitively until they got it right. . Come join us for our upcoming events where we talk and celebrate failures 🙌💡🔗.

A post shared by [Future Females \(@futurefemales\)](#) on Aug 20, 2018 at 12:18am PDT

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we heard from Ellen Fischat who has been involved in the incubator space as former MD of Silicon Cape, built up many of her own businesses and has also recently been appointed by the Dutch Embassy to head up the #InspiringFifty initiative, as one of the first Inspiring Fifty SA winners from last year.



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Fischat said it's a huge honour to be asked to present at an event like Future Females, but she joked that she wasn't sure whether to be scared when asked to talk about failure. She explained that she had only prepared pictures, not words as it's as hard to prepare a speech on failure. After all, if we planned for our failures, would they still be failures?

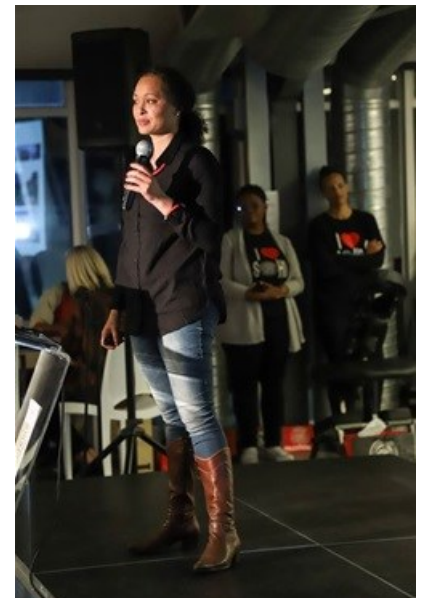
Sharing her own beginnings, Fischat was born in South Africa and spent her early years growing up in the Korsten area of PE. Her parents fled SA in 1982 for Amsterdam, making the move as refugees. She doesn't consciously remember this time, just that she was always cold and didn't understand others when they spoke. She said, "We had effectively moved from one ghetto to another."

Success is relative, as is failure

She then got us all to privately write down three things we have "epically failed" at, and to be brutally honest about it as no one else would see this list - we were soon scribbling away. Then, Fischat said to write down five things we do incredibly well. This was the much harder task of the two. It goes to show the role failure plays in our lives and the way we speak to ourselves internally.

Fischat then spoke of success as a series of favourable triumphs but added that success is relative and different to different people. For some, it's finishing a degree after many years, for others it's reaching private banking status. It's something we are taught in our own circles.

And failure is Fischat's biggest fear, but it's also what gets her out of bed every day. Just like success, failure is also relative and we need to learn to see it that way. For some, it's that we didn't become a doctor or haven't yet met our soul mate. For others, it's that we're not at our ideal weight or can't afford to live where we do.



Ellen Fischat.



Do. Learn. Fail. Repeat. Again and again.

Juanita Pienaar 6 Aug 2018



Fischat shared that the 'personal museum of failure' she carries with her is extensive, ranging from realising that spreadsheets are not her thing to picking up her children late from school and disappointing them.

This wasn't a depressing presentation at all, as Fischat also mentions that it's taken her 43 years to realise she is "the best me she can be". When something goes wrong, others try to lessen the blow by saying everything happens for a reason, but it's tough to accept that when it happens - especially if you did prepare.

“ But if you're not failing, or feeling uncomfortable or stressed, you're not growing. You are a survivor of your failures, fears and fu@k ups. Own that and incorporate your failures into your success story. ”

Fischat ended with some advice for everyone, whether you're an entrepreneur, intrapreneur or other:

- If you fail, acknowledge it and try fix it, don't beat yourself up about it.
- Learn to be your own hero, as she is the only one who knows what's really in, your heart and mind, so take care of her first.
- Fail your way to success. Be bold, be daring and use those 'failures' to learn what you can do differently.

Fischat ended:

“ I have felt broken and like my wings were clipped, but then I remember the saying, 'they broke my wings and forgot I had claws'. ”

Cue tremendous applause from the audience!

If that's what Future Females has accomplished in just one year, I can't wait to see what's next.

“ I'm done tweeting about [@Future_Females](#) for tonight but seriously, [#female #entrepreneurs](#) around the world, join the movement, or start a chapter in your city. [#FutureFemales](#) has invented an amazing recipe to channel the positive power of human connection! ❤️👉 [#WomensMonth](#)— Dr. Carolina Ödman (@carolune) [August 22, 2018](#) ”

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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