

# [ MAKING MISTAKES ]

MONDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2005

**Different people have different attitudes towards mistakes.  
It's not a crime to make one. But it is a crime not to learn from it.**

WORK WISE - A fortnightly column by Rahul Kapoor

This is the story about a boy called Rohit. He was a topper in school and would also do well in extra curricular activities. He got along with most people and would have a lot of respect for elders. Values, morals and ethics were very important for him. His parents were very proud of his achievements. They had a vision to send him to US for his further studies. However, he had to complete his pre-university in India before he could go to the US. Rohit got himself a seat in a premier institute in Bangalore.

A few days in college and he made new friends, he started going for parties, got into habits of smoking and drinking. He started neglecting his studies and even began bunking his lectures. His academic results started declining. His parents were worried and concerned. But Rohit would convince his parents that he would focus on education soon and that he just wanted to have a good time in the first year of college. He barely managed to scrape through his first year exams. But his fundamentals were weak and he found it very hard to follow the subjects in the second year. He failed. His parents' dreams and aspirations for him were shattered. His mother wept and father decided never to talk to him again. His friends deserted him and he realized that he had made a big mistake. Rohit's future was dark and dismal.

That's when he met his teacher Mr. T. Ramesh who counseled him and gave him the best advice of his life **Learn from your mistakes and never repeat them again.** The young boy, guided by his teacher, began to focus on his education. He gave up all his bad habits and worked really hard to finally pass his supplementary exams with a first class. Rohit had learnt from his mistakes. Although he had lost a year he had learnt a lesson in life, which made him stronger and wiser. Rohit finished his degree with a rank and also won the Best Outgoing Student of the Year Award.

This story is of a lot of significance to me because it speaks about a person's ability to accept mistake and learn from it as well. I believe that making a mistake is not a crime, but not learning from it, certainly is. Let's accept that none of us is perfect and its very human to make mistakes. But it's critical that we do not repeat them.

In fact, different people have different attitudes towards mistake.

There are some who are scared of making mistakes. Thus they play it safe and never really take any sort of initiatives. These kinds of people live an ordinary life and never really come up in life.

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There are some who get into a shell with one bad experience. They would have made a mistake but do not have the courage to fight the situation. They get too bogged down and get into an inferiority complex. They allow that one defeat to destroy them completely.

There are others who make mistakes but never learn from them. They repeat the same mistakes again and again. Such people never get respect from anybody, they are slow learners and lack sharpness in getting things done. Then there are those who make a mistake but do not accept it. They try to defend their point of view. In the bargain their approach affects the job-on-hand and time is wasted in arguments instead of getting results.

Yet another set of people make mistakes and blame it on others. They find excuses and start victimizing other people or the system. Such people can be dangerous for any team. Their approach brings in a lot of negativism and invariably people shy away from taking responsibilities.

It is people like Rohit who go on to succeed in life. I am not by any means suggesting that you must make mistakes consciously and then make amends. The point I am clearly making is that one should not worry too much after making mistakes. Gather your self and evaluate the situation and take corrective action immediately.

Let me share with you my own views about how you can deal with mistakes. First of all look at a mistake as an opportunity to learn, to gain experience and to get results. Accept your mistake and work towards controlling the damages. Find out why you went wrong and find ways of solving the problems. When you achieve the desired results, do take a moment off to congratulate yourself and then go on to share your experiences with others so that they do not repeat the same mistakes.

Also, when you find others in your team making mistakes treat them like how you would like others to treat you when you are in the same situation. People need guidance, motivation and patience. You need to believe that people can learn from their mistakes and provide them an opportunity to prove themselves again.