PUBLIC LIBRARIES

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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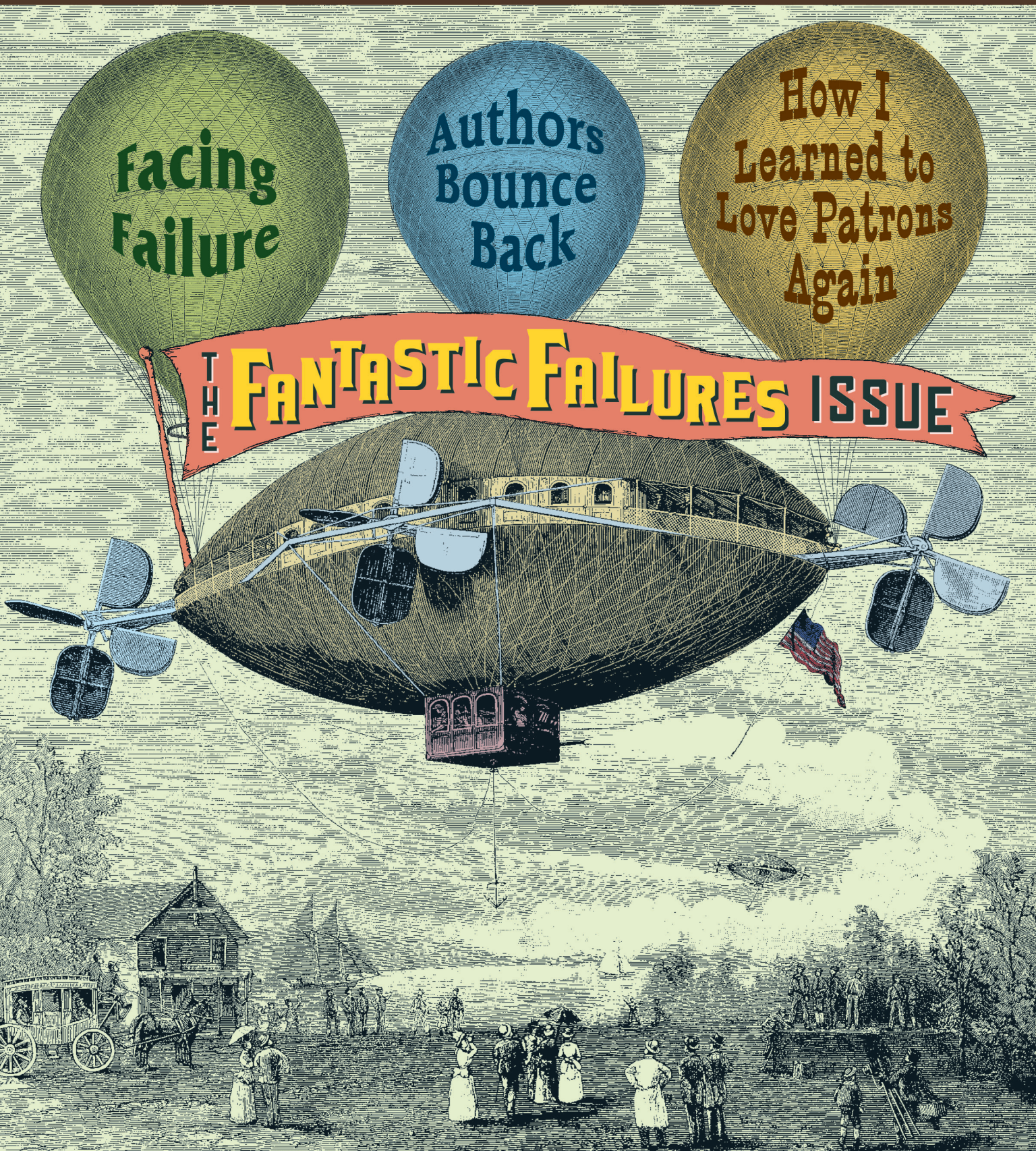



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PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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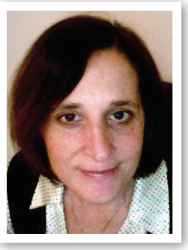

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KATHLEEN M. HUGHES

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Kathleen is currently reading *Les Parisiennes: How the Women of Paris Lived, Loved, and Died Under Nazi Occupation* by Anne Sebba.

Editor's Note

While "failure" might, at first glance, seem a depressing topic to focus on for an entire issue, I felt energized by reading our articles this month. All of our writers display tremendous vulnerability in discussing career setbacks, and I often found myself nodding along in empathy as I read their stories. Ultimately, I wrapped this issue with a surge of optimism. I was struck by our authors' resilience in dealing with professional hardships, and while I don't look forward to my next failure, I now feel armed with strategies to deploy when the time comes. I hope you do as well. *Authors Bounce Back* has some of my favorite authors sharing how they recovered from disappointments during various stages in their writing careers. In *Facing Failure*, Kristy Pasquariello outlines simple but effective ideas to keep in mind when coming eye to eye with failure. In *How I Learned to Love Patrons Again*, Matt Smith points out a seemingly innocuous habit that can create a culture of toxicity in your library, and then details specific steps you can take to create a healthier environment.

As always, I'd love to hear about your experiences. Have you gained insight after a program that didn't work? Is there a mode of thinking that you've found detrimental to your workplace? Share your story with us, either through a feature article for the magazine or a shorter article for *Public Libraries* Online. PL

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PLA News

PLA Introduces New Brand

In 2015, the PLA Board began discussing how best to approach objectives of its strategic plan related to enhancing perceptions of public libraries. Their goal was to consider how PLA could play a major role in public library advocacy and in influencing public perception about the library. As a result, PLA began work to reposition itself; to create a vision of what the public library means in the twenty-first century in order to give its members a new way to communicate the same ideas to their communities.

In February 2017, PLA officially introduced a new brand for the organization. Some changes are noticeable right away—like a new PLA logo inspired by the public library's role as a source of opportunity for every community. PLA is also updating the way it describes the ability of public libraries to help anyone learn, do, and grow. This work will help the association better convey to library partners, funders, and policymakers that wherever public libraries are working, possibility lives.

More information about the branding effort can be found at www.ala.org/pla/about/newlook.

New PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

At the 2017 American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta, the PLA Board approved the creation of a PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Cochaired by Richard Kong, director, Skokie (IL) Public Library and Amita Lonial, principal librarian, San Diego (CA) County Library, the task force has been charged with developing a strategic and coordinated approach for PLA related to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The task force will explore methods and consider resources to be developed that will allow PLA to take a multifaceted approach. Task force activities include but are not limited to: making recommendations for how EDI content is integrated into PLA programs; elevating successful libraries as models to generate and share best practices; identifying ways PLA might influence equity and inclusion within public libraries; and helping libraries serve diverse communities and staff.

"The current political and social climate is shining a harsh light on just how much we fall short of a truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive profession and society," said Kong. "It is imperative that we take an honest look at this reality and take concrete steps to bring long-lasting, meaningful changes that will advance equity, diversity and inclusion in both our profession and the communities we serve." Lonial added, "Public libraries have a legacy of embracing and advancing social justice. Recent events have libraries asking what that looks like in this political moment and how we can more authentically engage our core values of equity, diversity and inclusion. Our hope is that the task force can help to facilitate that dialogue and provide concrete tools and resources for public libraries of all types and sizes to participate and go deeper."

Public libraries have the ability to bring people and knowledge together. PLA is committed to its core values of openness and inclusiveness and supports the recent statement from ALA opposing the new administration's policies that contradict core library values. The PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will work to strengthen the organization's commitment to its core values, while ensuring issues of EDI remain a top priority.

The task force will report to the PLA Board of Directors at least twice per year. After two years, the board will review the work of the task force and recommend continuation, sunsetting, or creation of a standing committee. The task force will meet at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago and work virtually beforehand. Get more information at www.pla.org.

PLA Now Accepting Proposals for PLA 2018 Conference

PLA is now accepting preconference and program proposals for the PLA 2018 Conference, March 20–24 in Philadelphia. Proposals may be submitted online through the conference website. Faxed, emailed, or mailed proposals will not be accepted. PLA welcomes proposals for innovative, engaging, educational programming on a broad range of topics that will help attendees Imagine the Possibilities to make a difference in their workplace and in their community.



Preconferences are in-depth educational sessions for fifty to one hundred attendees. They can be half- or full-day in length. Preconferences typically require an additional registration fee for attendees. Programs are sixty-minute sessions that can feature a single speaker or a panel of speakers, or can be a guided audience discussion or activity. Attendance can vary from fifty to five hundred people. The deadline for submitting proposals is April 14, 2017, at 11:59 P.M. Eastern.

After the deadline, the proposal form will no longer be available, and new proposals will not be accepted. The PLA

2018 Conference Program Subcommittee, chaired by Aurora Martinez, director, Morley Library (Painesville, OH), will review all submitted proposals and select conference sessions based on their relevance to the profession and general interest to conference attendees. Further information regarding the proposal form, selection criteria, requirements, and instructions can be found online.

PLA is exploring how to make our conference more equitable, diverse, and inclusive. Our first step includes seeking and strongly encouraging submissions from marginalized groups including women, people of color, the LGBTQ community, and people with disabilities. PLA may be able to provide support in completing the proposal form and/or mentoring for first-time presenters.

Offered biennially, the PLA Conference has a reputation for excellence. The conference includes more than one hundred top-quality continuing education programs, several social events and networking opportunities, and a bustling exhibits hall. Get more information at www.placonference.org.

PLA's Year in Review

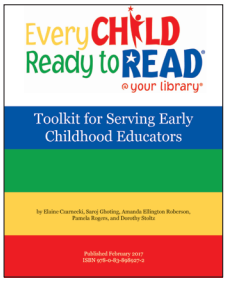
Check out PLA's new "Year in Review" report highlighting the association's work in 2016. In a message sent to PLA members, PLA President Felton Thomas reflected on 2016's highlights, stating, "on behalf of the PLA board and staff, I'd like to thank the many members, volunteers and partners who made it all possible. We look forward to another year of working hard to earn our place as the indispensable ally for public library leaders and staff, no matter the challenges that lie ahead."

The report highlights a variety of PLA activities including honors and achievements, advocacy, continuing education, initiatives, leadership, membership, and publications. See the report at https://spark.adobe.com/page/5JDPEHzBI9XVV or a text version at www.ala.org/pla/about/2016highlights.

New! *ECRR Toolkit for Serving Early Childhood Educators*

This latest addition to the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) family of products is primarily aimed at public library staff as a manual for training early childhood educators in helping young children get ready to read. Early childhood educators include licensed home childcare providers, childcare center staff, Head Start teachers, preschool teachers, and other childcare professionals. The toolkit includes a basic workshop with options for presenters to expand and/or to design additional workshops specific to the needs of the community. Topics include early literacy; constrained and unconstrained skills; decoding and comprehension; critical dimensions of language and literacy; early literacy skills; early literacy practice; and early literacy during routines and/or activities.

As with previous ECRR products, the slides contained in this kit are customizable, so you can edit the wording in the slides and the notes page, add and delete slides, and insert your own photos. The toolkit includes PowerPoint presentations, instructions, planning worksheets, handouts, booklists, evaluation forms, resources lists, and more!



Every Child Ready to Read Toolkit for Serving Early Childhood Educators by Elaine Czarnecki, Saroj Ghoting, Amanda Ellington Roberson, Pamela Rogers, and Dorothy Stoltz. Published February 2017 by ALSC and PLA. ISBN: 978-0-83-898927-2 (digital download ZIP file). Cost is $99.00—ALA members receive a 10 percent discount. Find it in the ALA Store at www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=11997.

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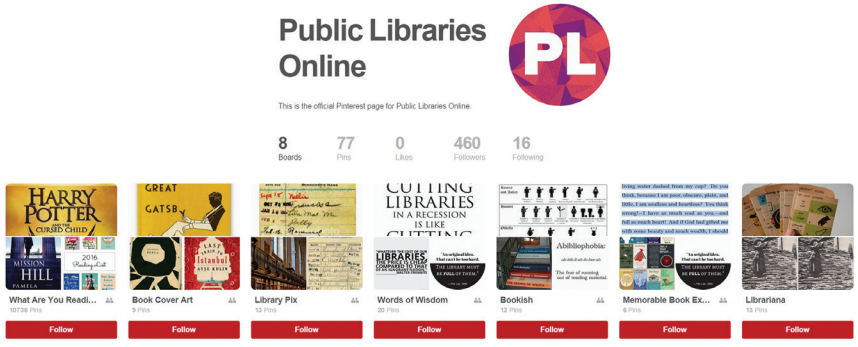



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Felton is currently reading *Whiplash: How to Survive Our Faster Future* by Joi Ito and Jeff Howe.

The Destination is "We"

The focus of this issue is on fantastic failures, and boy, do I have a lot of those. To narrow it down, I will seek to define a "fantastic failure" for this column not as an instance of being extraordinarily unsuccessful, but rather as an instance of being unsuccessful that led to an important learning breakthrough. I'm fortunate to have many fantastic failures of this type, as well. I'll focus on one in particular that stands out from deep in the past. The lessons I learned many years ago from this misstep serve as a foundation for my professional leadership and the lessons I pass on to others today.

More than twenty years ago, I was a young librarian working for the Las Vegas-Clark County (NV) Library District and I had just been given my first leadership role. I was asked to lead a district-wide committee and provide our director of public services with an important recommendation. I followed all the protocols. I determined the best date for the committee to meet, and contacted every committee member. I then sent out an agenda and a variety of articles to better prepare the team, and finally I brought snacks and water to the meeting to make sure that no one let hunger interrupt the brainstorming process.

Halfway through the meeting, I could feel that it wasn't going as I had expected. The other members seemed too quiet and the number of ideas that I had hoped to provide my public services director was far too small. As my manager walked through the door to check on us, I decided to increase the intensity and challenged the staff for more ideas. As soon as I did this, my manager looked away and I knew that I was the problem, not my colleagues. A committee member looked at his watch, got up, and left. Mercifully, my manager wrapped up the meeting and thanked everyone remaining for choosing to participate in the committee.

Once the last committee member had left, my manager closed the door and asked me to sit down beside her (never a good sign). My manager had been a supervisor for over thirty years, and realized that this moment could be crucial in my leadership development process. She also realized that admonishing me would probably be counterproductive, so she slowly and deliberately pointed out my mistakes.

First, she chided me about how I had set up the room. There was a long conference table in the room, and I had placed myself at the topmost spot. A better solution for a small committee of seven would have been to ignore the table and have all of us sit in a circle, especially for a brainstorming meeting. I had figuratively placed my ideas above everyone else's before anyone had even been allowed to speak. "Leadership," she said, "is about the leader's ability to listen. You proved yourself to be tone-deaf before they said a word."

Next, she pointed out to me that no one was speaking because I had dominated the discussion. I argued that I had continued to speak because no one else would, but she countered, "The meeting was to consider ideas, and you kept offering solutions…what were they going to add?" I then realized that I hadn't given them an opportunity to just speak freely after proposing all of my ideas. Finally, she offered her hardest-hitting critique. "Felton," she said, "everyone likes you and I think you'll make a great director one day, but not if everything is about you. You weren't very likeable today." That last line hurt, and she realized it, but didn't stop. "Felton, in the short time that I was in the room, you probably used 'I' a dozen times. A good

leader recognizes that the destination is 'we.'"

That phrase, "the destination is 'we'" has stuck with me ever since. I went on to make that committee, and many other leadership challenges since, successful from what I learned that day. My fantastic failure has paved the way for my success throughout my career and proves the important role that mentors can play in our professional development. I'm proud that PLA believes not only that we should cultivate public library services, but that we should build public library leaders as well. PLA's Leadership Academy has recently announced its third cohort of leadership participants and we are excited about our new crop of future leaders.

The career-changing event for public librarians is designed to empower participants with the knowledge necessary to be innovative and successful leaders of change. I want to thank former PLA President Carolyn Anthony and Adam Goodman, director of the Center for Leadership, Northwestern University, for their leadership on this program.

At PLA, the destination is "we," and we thank you for allowing us to be an ally in your professional journey. PL

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ONLINE

Digital Highlights | www.publiclibrariesonline.org

For this issue, we decided to peek into the *PL Online* archives and find posts that addressed the topic of learning from failure. Here are few that fit the bill. Check out www.publiclibrariesonline.org for more on this and other library topics.

"Finding Courage to Take Risks in Life and Library" by Amy Crump (posted December 2, 2015)
In late October, I had the pleasure of hearing Beck Tench present a program at the Illinois Library Association annual conference. The title of her talk was "Librarians in Space: How to Make Space, Find Courage and Take Risks in Your Life and Library." Tench gave a great talk, offering insights creating a culture of risk taking on both personal and professional levels. I left with several take-aways. ***Read the entire article at http://bit.ly/2knWNwp.***

"Take Chances, Make Mistakes" by Melanie A. Lyttle and Shawn D. Walsh (posted April 30, 2014)
You have an amazing idea for an innovative program. You have gone through all the roadblocks and setbacks of trying something new, and you convince your boss to let you try it. Now what? Is it a success? Is it ho-hum? Is it a spectacular failure? Regardless, you have had a learning experience, and you are a brave librarian for breaking the mold and trying something new. ***Read the entire article at http://bit.ly/2kOJzcW.***

"Outreach in a Box" by Ben Malczewski (posted January 6, 2014)
There are many reasons community partnerships might fail—unclear or undefined roles, an inadequately defined or differently interpreted vision, unfocused or uncommunicated (and thus assumed) hierarchy of leadership and delegation, more hugs than decisions (confusing the goal of collaborating as being collaboration or team work, when it actually should be solutions and results)—but naturally, even to get to these, you have to show up. ***Read the entire article at http://bit.ly/2jSn5Dv.***

"Fail Like a Winner" by Brandie Doyle (posted May 9, 2013)
I'm afraid I have some bad news for the library community. Collectively we are suffering from a rampant case of atychiphobia: a persistent fear of failure. Its primary indicator is "a reluctance to try new things or get involved in challenging projects." Symptoms may also include anxiety, procrastination, feet dragging, low confidence, and/or debilitating perfectionism. ***Read the entire article at http://bit.ly/2kdRrBs.*** PL

Plan Ahead for PLA 2018!

PLA is heading to Philadelphia for the PLA 2018 Conference, March 20–24, 2018, and we want to make sure you're coming, too! Visit www.placonference.org for preliminary information to get you started on planning and budgeting your trip. PL





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Jessica is currently reading *Painted Lady* by Elizabeth Peters (June 2017) and listening to *Carpe Jugulum* (2000) by Terry Pratchett, narrated by Nigel Planer.

Under the Radar is where you'll find media of note that might not be getting tons of publicity, but your patrons are sure to be interested in.

Epic Failure Is Always an Option

I love a good underdog archetype. Whether they are fantastic failures or lovable losers, these characters abound in popular culture and appear in all media formats in public library collections. Readers and viewers enjoy stories of everyfolk who have a great idea, execute it boldly (and sometimes badly), fail spectacularly, and learn a thing or two along the way. What's heartening is that like library staff, the one thing these characters learn is that while failure is certainly an option, giving up never is.

Classic cowardly cad Harry Flashman never met a conflict he couldn't run away from and laugh at later. His comically epic adventures begin in *Flashman: From the Flashman Papers, 1839–1842* (1969). He's witty, roguish, and not to be admired for anything but his persistence.

Persistence and penury certainly pay off for Dewey Finn in the musical comedy film, *School of Rock* (2003). Recently kicked out of his band, Dewey scams his way into a job as a substitute teacher of fourth-graders who are definitely smarter than he is. He passes his zeal for music onto his young brainiacs and discovers an outlet for his avocation through his new vocation. Take your passion, make it happen: libraries know this song intimately.

Or keep doing what you know you're good at, despite what others think. A lesser-known television show, *The Last Detective* (2003), is a good suggestion for viewers who've watched all the BBC crime shows and want something a little lighter on the blood and body count and heavier on the humor. Based on the books by Leslie Thomas, the show follows Detective Constable "Dangerous" Davies. Davies is shunned by his colleagues, overlooked for promotion, and designated dog walker for his ex-wife, yet he still manages to solve cases and not become a clichéd lone-wolf detective.

More recently, antiheroes have become popular in fantasy and are practically de rigueur in the latest subgenre of grim-dark stories for teens. Mark Lawrence's debut, *Prince of Thorns* (2011), introduced readers to Jorg Ancrath, one of the most violent and ruthless teenagers to lead a band of mercenaries. Not for the faint of heart, this trilogy explores the dark side of fantasy and the realities of a violent world while introducing readers to a lead character who is impossible to see as a traditional fantasy hero, yet who will fascinate his audience.

Joe Abercrombie's latest trilogy opens with *Half a King* (2014). Like Jorg, main character Yarvi is a prince in exile, desperate to return home and get his vengeance. Abercrombie's revenge-fueled stories have become a popular oeuvre in modern fantasy and this series is the perfect place for teen and adult readers to explore his violent world, penned in shades of grey.

Readers who prefer a slightly less violent antihero should be directed to *Lies of Locke Lamora* (2006), the story of a group of master con artists who run circles around everyone else in the city, pulling off the most fantastic heists and reveling in their lives as free men. That is until they go just a bit too far and start to lose every-

thing in a desperate battle with a criminal mastermind whose violence and cruelty know no limits.

Probably the most epic fail in American business history is credited to Preston Tucker, the designer of the "car of the future" the Edsel. A comprehensive examination of the rise and fall of this automotive visionary, Steve Lehto's *Preston Tucker and His Battle to Build the Car of Tomorrow* (2016) is a stunning analysis of a fantastic failure that shouldn't have been.

And for anyone who thinks Pinterest exists solely to make you despair over your own shortcomings and failures, I offer this: www.pinterestfail.com. You're welcome and you rock. PL

FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast

Visit http://bit.ly/plapodcasts to listen to PLA's podcast series, *FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast*. These short, information-packed segments offer an easy way to explore initiatives or hear more about new ideas in the public library world. You can listen directly from our site, or subscribe via iTunes. A sampling of available episodes includes:

- **Episode 8:** Live from PLA 2016! Dan Wilson, associate director for collections and library services at the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, University of Virginia Health System, and Siobhan Champ-Blackwell, librarian at the National Library of Medicine, discuss how librarians and libraries are vital resources for the community during disasters, as they are in the best position to verify and disseminate correct information to the community.
- **Episode 9:** Live from PLA 2016! Nichole Shabazz, youth outreach and programming coordinator at the Cleveland (OH) Public Library and Phyllis Hunter, reading and literacy expert, Phyllis C. Hunter Consulting, Inc., discuss the conference program, "Where the Black and Brown Boys Aren't (and Why)".
- **Episode 10:** Live from PLA 2016! Sarah Lawton, neighborhood library supervisor, Madison (WI) Public Library and Tariq Saqqaf, neighborhood resource coordinator, City of Madison, Office of the Mayor, discuss how libraries can address racial disparities and create more inclusive public spaces.
- **Episode 11:** Ady Huertas, branch manager of the Logan Branch/San Diego Public Library discusses the library's program, "Out of the Shadows." The program is designed to raise public awareness about the problem of sex trafficking in San Diego, bring to light the plight of sex trafficking victims and at-risk youth, and provide resources and support services for those in need in the San Diego area.
- **Episode 12:** *PL* Editor Kathleen Hughes talks to Sonja Skvarla, founder of A Social Ignition. Founded in 2012, A Social Ignition was conceived while Skvarla was helping various groups fulfill their missions in the field of post-prison reentry. She developed a curriculum of entrepreneurship and professional development and offered it to the Oregon Department of Corrections. Today, A Social Ignition is off and running using its entrepreneurship and professional development program to help people reenter society after incarceration. The program teaches business lessons but participants also develop self-confidence and learn to use the experience they already have.
- **Episode 13:** PLA's Kathleen Hughes talks to Holly Hibner and Mary Kelly about weeding library collections, awful library books they've discovered, and more. The authors have recently released a book in PLA's Quick Reads series, titled *Weeding Manual*. In addition, they are cofounders of the popular blog *Awful Library Books* (www.awfullibrarybooks.com) and co-authors of the book *Making a Collection Count: A Holistic Approach to Library Collection Management* (2010). Hibner is adult services coordinator at Plymouth (MI) District Library and Kelly is youth services librarian at the Lyons Township (MI) Library.
- **Episode: 14:** PLA Deputy Executive Director Larra Clark talks with John B. Horrigan of the Pew Research Center about his report, "Digital Readiness Gaps," which finds that just over half of American adults have low levels of readiness to use digital tools as they pursue lifelong learning.
- **Episode 15:** We talk with Jeffrey Fisher, author of the latest book in PLA's Quick Reads Series, *Building and Operating a Digital Media Lab*. Topics include creating the right space; arranging funding; hiring and training staff; buying the correct equipment; writing policies and procedures; and more.
- **Episode 16:** PLA's Kathleen Hughes talks with Erin Hoopes, head of the Philadelphia City Institute Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Hoopes discusses an initiative she spearheaded at the Free Library, a teen social justice symposium. PL

Best Practices focuses on innovative ideas from libraries nationwide.



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Amanda is currently reading *Eleanor and Hick* by Sally Quinn.

How to Bounce Back

When it comes to failure, we've all heard how important it is to "bounce back." But when you've invested a lot in a project, it's difficult to look beyond the disappointment to the work that still needs to be accomplished. For this issue, here's a look at how three libraries grapple with the disappointment of failure, learn from it, and try to proactively counter it.

Best Practice: Failure Is a Learning Opportunity

In her article, "Strategies for Learning from Failure," Amy Edmondson provides an introduction to the psychology of failure: why it bothers us so much, why it's so frequently accompanied by the need to assign blame, and why that isn't the best way to approach the failure.[1] In Edmondson's experience, more failures are treated as blameworthy than actually deserve to be—and this has negative consequences for staff.

By grouping failures into three categories—(1) preventable, (2) complexity-related, and (3) intelligent—Edmondson provides a framework for contextualizing mistakes. By breaking those down further into nine reasons for failure, she gives managers the opportunity to see failure along a spectrum. Some of these reasons are more blameworthy, she writes, and some are actually "praiseworthy." These praiseworthy failures are the result of creative exploration, and fostering that kind of curiosity is essential to later success.

For managers, Amy Gallo's "How to Help Your Team Bounce Back from Failure" offers targeted strategies for leaders to support their staff when projects don't go as planned. Gallo particularly focuses on promoting accountability without necessarily encouraging or assigning blame.[2]

Collaboration, Flexibility, Planning

Racine (WI) Public Library

What happens when a new project feels like a failure to staff but is a success for patrons? That's the conundrum that recently confronted management at Racine (WI) Public Library, where a project to rethink service delivery for adults enjoyed popular approval from patrons, but was not sustainable for staff.

"We needed to free up reference staff from being tied to a desk, but, at the same time, continue to manage a heavy on-desk workload," said Darcy Mohr, Head of Adult and Youth Services.[3] Part of the problem had to do with the building layout: in what staff affectionately call "patron ping-pong," adult patrons would often find themselves bouncing between the reference desk, on the second floor, and circulation services, on the main level. After surveying staff in reference and circulation, the library decided to try an experiment: staffing the reference desk with staff from each department. This way, circulation staff could take care of patrons' immediate needs without requiring them to head downstairs.

From a patron perspective, this effort was a great success: during the trial

period, staff missed eighty percent fewer calls, and the "ping-pong effect" was minimized. But on the staff side, the experiment was frustrating for both departments. Because departments were not trained together, everyone heard different information and had disparate understandings of the project and how it would proceed.

The library will build on the experience for future changes to service delivery. "We recognized that there was an opportunity to do more research when reevaluating services and use, looking at changes other libraries have successfully implemented," Mohr said, adding that there was also a missed chance "to bring staff into the project." Bouncing back from this disappointment has yielded positive outcomes, too. An interdepartmental team is now visiting libraries around Wisconsin and in neighboring Illinois as a group, working together and giving frontline reference and circulation staff a lot of input.

"My advice is to find the right balance between planning too much and being afraid to dive in," Mohr said.

Stopping (Communication) Failure Before It Starts

Somerset County (NJ) Library System

Communicating change is the kind of skill managers must develop over time. Opportunities for failure abound, and the consequences can have a lasting impact on internal or external relations, particularly if trust is eroded due to misinformation. For Lynn Hoffman, Director of Operations at Somerset County (NJ) Library System, managing a major staff change was the first challenge on her agenda upon stepping into her new role. With an organization-wide transition to Google Apps, Hoffman had her work cut out for her in supporting her new staff through the change. Her experience in navigating that change is a core example in a free webinar she presented for an Illinois library consortium.[4]

"In my experience, there is no such thing as over-communication," Hoffman explained.[5] To manage the Google transition, Hoffman created a calendar, working backwards from the implementation date to identify when all communications would be sent and what topics they would share. Putting a plan in writing ensured that communication would be thoughtful, consistent, and strategic: all staff received the same core messaging.

The volume or frequency of communication frequently preoccupies managers leading staff through change, but there's more to effective change management. Hoffman recommends analyzing additional variables: the kinds of communication channels being used, the way staff (or patrons) would be likely to respond, likely pitfalls or problems along the way, and opportunities for misinformation to spread.

Similarly, people respond to news differently depending on their role within the organization and the ways in which the changes will affect them. Empathy is a key component to supporting staff effectively.

Hoffman now creates a project plan to share with staff to cover key aspects of the messaging: goals, timeline, communications planning, and a summary of potential obstacles and ideas for overcoming them. Transparency with the plan is an opportunity to involve staff in the process and reassures them that management is taking a proactive, strategic approach.

Steps to Success

Marin County (CA) Free Library

When Sara Jones became director of the Marin County (CA) Free Library (MCFL), she brought with her a wealth of experience working with libraries in varied communities, each with its own challenges. While moving to a new organization brings new opportunities, it inevitably means leaving behind projects that were important and a core part of one's legacy. For Jones, leaving behind Carson City (NV) Public Library meant bidding farewell to the Business Resource Innovation Center (BRIC), a project which allowed the library to work more closely with local government to deliver innovative services to business owners.

The BRIC project utilized two major grants and a great deal of coordination with the city to launch a second library facility in the same building as the city's planning and development offices. With a targeted collection, staffing, and a focus on business development, BRIC was, in effect, a kind of business incubator.

It was difficult for Jones, by then in California, to learn that the BRIC had to close its doors when the city no longer needed the space. But she was able to look on the bright side. "Even if, long-term, it didn't work," she said, "we really did change their minds about the library's role."[6] For Jones, the project provided valuable experience in working effectively with local government, lessons she's put to good use at MCFL.

MCFL's Education and Equity project has seen the library align its work very closely with the nineteen school districts in its service area, which serve a wide range of communities, including schools whose students live in poverty. MCFL's commitment to equity means that the library is doing its part to deliver equalizing services for those who need it most, including a Wi-Fi hotspot pilot that's bringing Internet access to students who can't access the web from home. PL

References and Notes

1. Amy C. Edmondson, "Strategies for Learning from Failure," *Harvard Business Review*, Apr. 2011, accessed Feb. 10, 2017, https://hbr.org/2011/04/strategies-for-learning-from-failure.
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3. Darcy Mohr, phone interview with the author, Jan. 20, 2017.
4. Access the full recorded webinar, including slides and all handouts, at www.railslibraries.info/ce/archive/114575.
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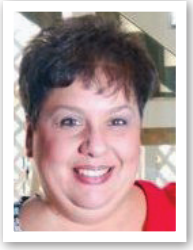
Perspectives offers varied viewpoints on subjects of interest to the public library profession.



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Fail Fast and Prosper

Learning from Our Mistakes

According to Amy C. Edmondson, "The wisdom of learning from failure is incontrovertible. Yet organizations that do it well are extraordinarily rare. This gap is not due to a lack of commitment to learning."[1] Edmondson goes on to explain that there is such a thing as "intelligent failures." These kinds of failures can be considered good failures because they provide valuable knowledge. She talks about the need to create learning cultures in order to succeed. That was the idea behind a one-day conference offered in Massachusetts in 2015.

On a sunny Tuesday in June, librarians and library staff from across the state of Massachusetts came together at Fort Devons for the Massachusetts Library System's (MLS) spring conference. The theme of the day was "Fail Fast and Prosper." Internationally known speaker Valerie Young, EdD, a leading expert on impostor syndrome, delivered the keynote address. While Young's talk was enlightening, the best part of the day was the Ignite Session. During the ninety-minute program, ten public, school, and academic librarians told us about times that they had failed early on, only to learn from those failures and in turn succeed. The topics included "Implementing School-Wide Summer Reading in a School That Didn't Read," "How Librarians Can Prevent Napping during Info Lit Instruction," "A Broader Perspective in Library Programming," "Sexual Abuse Prevention in Libraries: An Unlikely Partnership?" "Road Open Due to Flooding," "The Path to Director Is Paved with Rejection," "Renovating a Library: Turning the Garage into a Temporary Home," "Where Have All the Patrons Gone?," "Library Instruction Success at Worcester State University," and my personal favorite, "Press Nine to Get Out: The Story of a Major Facilities Failure 90 Minutes into a New Job." Following lunch, there was a breakout session titled "Responding to Crisis with Innovation."[2]

To find out how one Massachusetts librarian learned from her mistake, read on below.

The Waltham Public Library Goes to the New England Aquarium

Louise Goldstein, Head Circulation Librarian, Waltham (MA) Public Library, lgoldstein@minlib.net

I work at the Waltham Public Library in Massachusetts as the head of circulation services. Our population is diverse and urban. We have approximately 63,000 persons living in 12.7 square miles with a population density of approximately 4,962 people per square mile. Our dynamic and forward-looking director, Kelly Linehan, instituted a Waltham Community Read this year with an interesting twist. The community read was titled *Watch, Read, Listen*. It emphasized sharing a story in a variety of formats.

The title selected was *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. We purchased multiple copies of *The Jungle Book* in original and simplified versions, editions in

foreign languages, and related titles. We also bought audio of the same materials and the various film versions of the story, including the new one that came out last summer. Talented staff decorated our library like a jungle and created a beautiful paper tree at our ground floor entrance. Library visitors could sign a leaf that would then be hung up for all to enjoy. We even visited nursing homes and had residents sign leaves that we brought back to the library.

It was my great good fortune to be a member of the programming committee for this exciting venture, which began with a fundraiser in June and went all through the summer. One of the programs that I decided to try was a partnership with the New England Aquarium in Boston. We would have a community reading of "The White Seal," a wonderful story by Kipling that is part of the original *Jungle Book*. The media relations director at the aquarium was willing to work with me to coordinate and schedule this event. He agreed to give us fifty free passes to the aquarium for our invitees. The aquarium is at its busiest and most expensive in the summer, so this was a real treat for us.

Our staff met to discuss how best to make this program work and decided we should check with the Waltham Boys and Girls Club, which is literally next door to our library. This would connect us with teens from their camp, allowing us to bring a diverse group of campers reflective of Waltham's population to the Aquarium. The Boys and Girls Club would transport all of the campers safely to the New England Aquarium, thus making transportation smooth and safe.

We worked diligently to get the program together. We would have a reading on the first level of the aquarium, followed by a seal show. This seemed perfect and we were very excited. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we learned that the teen campers would not be able to come to the aquarium. Instead, we would bring a group of five- and six-year-old campers.

We revised and edited and revised, and came up with a distilled and simplified version of "The White Seal." We decided that the counselors could help us with the reading. Content and excited, our fateful day in August arrived. We all drove to the Aquarium and got ourselves set up. It wasn't long before we discovered that something was wrong: we had not anticipated the noise level. Seals were frolicking in the water and there were hundreds of people coming in to watch. The area was super loud and the children could not hear what we were saying, even when we used the mic.

This is where I had to make a judgement call. I decided that we should stop the reading, since our voices were simply not coming through. Library staff members jumped right into the fray. They connected with the kids and acted as if this was what we had planned all along. The fifteen minutes between our reading and the planned seal show felt like ten hours to me. Luckily, other library staffers had made smooth, easy conversation with the campers.

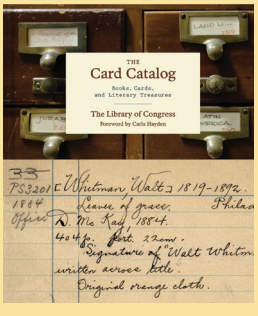
In retrospect, I wish that we had brought a backup craft of some sort. We could have had seal coloring sheets or simple books about seals for the children to view quietly. I am still thrilled that we were able to provide free admission to the New England Aquarium for fifty people and we are satisfied that the campers had a good time.

The take-home lesson for me is: expect the unexpected, keep a sense of humor, and have a backup plan. This was a great fail-fast-and-prosper experience for me, and I wanted to share it with all of you. PL

Reference and Note

1. Amy C. Edmondson, "Strategies for Learning from Failure," *Harvard Business Review*, Apr. 2011, accessed Feb. 10, 2017, https://hbr.org/2011/04/strategies-for-learning-from-failure.
2. Slides of the presentations and workshop handouts can be found at http://guides.masslibsystem.org/c.php?g=570376&p=3930562.

A Look Inside the Library of Congress



The Card Catalog: Books, Cards, and Literary Treasures explores the fascinating history of the Library of Congress with more than two hundred full-color images of books, artifacts, photos, and original card catalogs from its extraordinary archives. Filled with fun facts and historical trivia, the book discusses the origins of the library and early cataloging systems dating back to ancient Mesopotamia and the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. Readers will also learn how the Library of Congress was established and about the challenges it faced. Includes images of iconic books, artifacts, and documents throughout, creating a thoughtful balance of photos and text. Readers will delight in being able to examine such literary treasures as Shakespeare's *First Folio*, a first edition of *The Scarlet Letter*, and a handwritten note from Mark Twain in the first edition of *Huckleberry Finn*. History buffs will appreciate the original card entries that feature *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and plans of the Wright Brothers' first airplane. Includes a foreword by the Librarian of Congress, Carla Hayden. *The Card Catalog* will be available April 4, 2017, right before National Library Week (April 9–15). For more information visit www.chronicle books.com.—*Raymond Garcia, PLA Intern* PL

The Wired Library explores tech topics relevant to public librarians.



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Mikael is currently reading *Norse Mythology* by Neil Gaiman.

A Partial List of My Failures

Failure hurts. It really, really hurts. But painful failure can be a great teacher if you have the right mindset and work in an enlightened organization. Your mindset can make the difference between making positive changes and repeating old mistakes.

Mindset

Carol Dweck, the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, wrote *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2006), a work I use as a cornerstone for addressing the idea of failure. Her extensive research sorts people as having either a fixed mindset or a growth mindset.[1]

A fixed mindset avoids challenges, gives up easily, sees effort as pointless, ignores meaningful feedback, and is threatened by the success of others. People with a fixed mindset generally believe that they have a static level of intelligence. It is most important for them to make no mistakes or even ask questions and look stupid because that would mean they *are* stupid. Any risk that can lead to failure is to be avoided at all costs. Or, more insidiously in my opinion, the fixed mindset individual never fails; some statistic, comment, experience, feeling shows them a significant level of success no matter what other evidence is produced.

A growth mindset embraces change, persists when facing issues, believes effort is vital, learns from feedback, and finds inspiration in the success of others. An individual with a growth mindset thinks that intelligence can be earned through hard work and that failure is something to be dissected and understood for future undertakings.

For much of my life I leaned toward a fixed mindset, at least at the initial reaction level. I would avoid tasks and activities that I was not immediately good at and dismiss their importance. For example, my handwriting is awful. (No, even worse than yours, it isn't even close.) I gave up on handwriting very early in life as it didn't come easily enough, compared to other children around me. I decided this tool was inessential, taking various shortcuts instead of working hard to improve. I even justified my awful handwriting with a story about breaking a finger playing tennis at a young age. Fixed mindset, one hundred percent—not being able to do something well meant it was unimportant, those who could do it well were just naturally gifted, and this is who I was and there was nothing that could change this fact.

I am going to go through some of my professional failures and consider how I reacted, with a fixed or growth mindset.

The List

1. Skokie in Motion

Skokie in Motion was a program I organized to highlight local production of short films with a secondary goal of highlighting our digital media lab. The first year

was a success, with eighteen entries and nearly a hundred attendees. The following two years, I could not attract enough entries to move forward with the festival. I planned the second event about fifteen months after the first one and did not do nearly as much recruiting of content producers; for the third event, I tried a different time of year but made no other significant change.

I consider this a fixed and then a growth mindset failure. It was fixed as I made very little change between the second and third iterations of the festival, besides trying a different date. However, I moved on to a growth mindset as with the help of former PLA Director Carolyn Anthony I examined why the festival failed the third time. I concluded that because of a position change I didn't have the capacity to really push this program with the amount of effort needed to make it a success. Our library may revisit this program again in the future, though another staff member will take leadership and the title will change.

2. Skokie Stories

Skokie Stories was an oral history project based on the design of StoryCorps (https://storycorps.org). At least that was my vision for the project. StoryCorps encourages individuals to come together and have an authentic, meaningful discussion, which is recorded via audio. I defy you to listen to their pieces without tearing up or cracking up. I envisioned Skokie Stories inspiring recordings of grandmothers and granddaughters discussing family history, husbands and wives reminiscing about growing up in Skokie, and other heart-touching chats. My patrons would take out a sheet of suggested conversation starters and an MP3 recorder, and they would be amazing. Family history would be recorded, the library would bring people together in a deeply impactful way, digital literacy would increase through using a new technology, the library's digital archives would expand, and it would basically run itself!

This did not work at all. I could not sell this vision to my colleagues and stakeholders. I still cringe when remembering the pitying looks and gentle suggestions that I would not allow to alter my unrealistic project plan.

The actual project consisted of my trying to learn how to shoot and conduct an interview with less-than-excellent cameras and no journalistic experience. This project was extremely time intensive and had little impact. The patrons I reached had no interest in interviewing each other using the library as a resource. I blamed the patrons for not understanding this powerful idea, my colleagues for not understanding my majestic vision, the equipment, my marketing team (though I never once actually went to talk to them about this project)—really, it was everybody's fault but mine.

Obviously, this was a totally fixed mindset. Older me knows that I failed in large part because I prioritized what I thought was cool over asking patrons about their own aspirations.

3. Drupal

I was a huge Drupal proponent. I was partially responsible for introducing the Drupal content management system in my region. I led discussions and lectures on Drupal and answered hundreds of questions. I showed how to create content types and design "views" to group and sort content types. It was all so easy! Please understand, many libraries have done wonderful things with Drupal, but I was advocating the use of this difficult-to-grasp system to librarians, regardless of skill level.

I was so excited about using the resource that I never stopped to think, is this the best tool for the job for my audience? Well, for small libraries it is definitely not the best. Even for me, with technical competency, updating Drupal is something I still have nightmares about. Though I am not at fault for libraries choosing to use Drupal, I am at fault for not presenting its flaws as thoroughly as I presented its benefits. It is only recently that I began to recognize this as a failure. I see this as another eventual growth mindset, and as I take part in discussions about innovations I will forevermore be cognizant of presenting the whole of an idea or tool.

Conclusion

Thinking, talking, and writing about failure can be a difficult but powerful process. As I was contemplating this article, I listed my professional failures to decide which ones I felt comfortable sharing. Looking through all of them (at least the ones I remembered) was somewhat like looking through an old junior high yearbook, making me cringe every few moments. That being said, it was very useful to examine each failure and consider them through the lens of growth vs. fixed mindset. For me, the most heartening of Dweck's messages is the idea that you can help bring about a growth mindset in others as well as yourself. My mindset is moving from fixed to growth, and I aspire to do this for my team and organization moving forward. PL

Reference

1. Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Random House, 2006).



Forward Thinking focuses on innovation and new ideas in public libraries.



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Kevin is currently reading *The Effective Manager* by Mark Horstman and *Every Anxious Wave* by Mo Daviau.

It Takes a Second to Wreck It

I am still paying for my first mistake as a department head. After eight years of working at the Kalamazoo (MI) Public Library as a teen services librarian, and then as lead librarian at a branch, I was being promoted to the big leagues—department head. My chance had finally arrived to impart my wisdom and foresight on a larger scale. It was my turn to make changes, push out the old, traditional systems, and bring forth a new way of thinking about libraries. Now that I was in charge, all the stuff that annoyed me about the place where I worked was going to instantly transform to something much better. Make room on the awards shelf, I had arrived.



Positive change and innovation are worthy goals. In my previous role, I worked in the trenches with many of the people I was now being asked to lead. I was going to have to evaluate a staff member who was a close friend, who had been to my house for dinner! The path towards meaningful change was going to be arduous, but I had a proven track record of success, so it was going to be easy. How could anyone resist my enthusiasm, great ideas, and work ethic? Without realizing it, I had decided I could force my staff to think like me.

My initial thought was that I needed to be a tough guy to get them to think and innovate like me. What I had observed was that this group needed some discipline. The department needed someone who could hold them accountable for their mistakes. The team needed a drill sergeant like the one in the movie *Full Metal Jacket*, who could break them down and build them back up into a well-oiled fighting machine. Any fool who got in my way was going to pay the price for their insubordination. I wanted to establish my authority.

My downfall began in my first week of being a department head. One of my direct subordinates was in my office discussing his day-to-day work and he started to describe a circulation process that, in my opinion, was archaic and wrong. I remember feeling actual disgust with the process he was detailing because it flew against my distinct vision for the team. This was the perfect time for me to exert my command, so I called the entire team into my small, cramped office and turned on drill-

sergeant mode. For the next few minutes I spouted off demands, instructions, and criticisms. It needed to be clear that I was there to change the culture, and it was going to be hard for all of them. Basically, I was a first-class jerk. Even worse, I was being a jerk to the people I was working side-by-side with!

Following that ill-fated meeting, I was shocked to discover that the team was reluctant to adapt any innovation or change I put forth. Why were they not implementing the great ideas I shared with them individually and in group meetings? Why did it take forever for staff to move on my suggestions? Were they working against me? It took little time for me to realize that in my effort to institute some innovative ideas, I failed to establish the trust necessary to truly innovate.

The great hip-hop philosophers the Beastie Boys once rhymed, "It takes a second to wreck it, it takes time to build, you gots to chill."[1] I wanted very badly to invigorate a staff that I had perceived as being slow to innovate, so I mistakenly tried to use a hammer to drive in my ideas. In no time at all, I had wrecked any excitement for change, and the trust needed from my team to build towards system-wide innovation crumbled before it had even formed. I had failed to understand that for innovation to have a firm foundation, I needed a team that was willing to trust the direction I was promoting. I needed to personally and intentionally bring them along in the process.

Amy Gallo, a writer for the *Harvard Business Review*, put together a list of some helpful tips for transitioning from being a peer to a boss.[2] The first tip I took to heart was to tread lightly. As a new manager, I should not have tried to jam a bunch of new ideas down their throats. It would have been better if I spent time learning the operation and then suggesting smaller changes. Over time, after developing trust and demonstrating an openness to building ideas, I could have offered plans for much larger changes that might overhaul a long-standing system. Innovation is more easily accepted when it is gradually and methodically introduced.

Another tip from Gallo is to be actively present. Spend time with each of your new direct subordinates. Ask, "What can I do to make you more successful?" This question shows that you're in charge but also conveys that you are there to support them during the implementation of the innovation or change. Instead of insisting that the team sit quietly in my office while I ranted about how changes were on the horizon, I should have scheduled separate times with each member of the team. During these one-on-one meetings, I could have listened to their own ideas and their concerns about the impending changes.

The final tip in Gallo's article that really struck a chord was to make use of the advantages. One major benefit of being the leader of former peers is that you are likely have someone in the group that you trust to give you feedback on how you are managing. As I mentioned above, a member of my team was a close friend, and I should have consulted with him on how to best share my innovative agenda. I may have not failed as badly if I had taken the time to meet with that trusted friend and explain my game plan to him. I had thought it was unprofessional to maintain that close friendship during the transition, but in the end I had missed out on an opportunity to extend the trust we had beyond our relationship and to the entire team.

That single incident has inspired me to become a better leader. It taught me that to get others on my team excited about innovation, I needed to do the hard work of building trust first. If all leaders take the time to be actively present and admit to when they fail, a culture of innovation will grow over time. Many innovators want to immediately push hard against the wave of complacency, but make the grave mistake of doing it with a big stick. This will always lead to failure. Take it from the Beastie Boys, you gots to chill. PL

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1. Beastie Boys, "It Takes Time to Build," *To The 5 Boroughs* (2004).
2. Amy Gallo, "How to Manage Your Former Peers," *Harvard Business Review*, Dec. 19, 2012, accessed Feb. 13, 2017, https://hbr.org/2012/12/how-to-manage-your-former-peer.

Sarah Jessica Parker Named Honory Chair of ALA's Book Club Central

The American Library Association (ALA) is creating Book Club Central, a new online platform of reading resources, including recommendations, expert book lists, and other content for book clubs and their readers. Award-winning television and film actor, producer, designer, library supporter, and avid reader Sarah Jessica Parker is partnering with ALA to serve as the honorary chair of Book Club Central.

As honorary chair, Parker will provide a selection of recommended titles for Book Club Central throughout the year. She will unveil her inaugural pick at the official launch of Book Club Central, which will take place during the President's Program at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on Saturday, June 24, at 3:30 p.m. at McCormick Place West. According to Pew Research, more than 78 percent of Americans believe that libraries are effective at promoting literacy and love of reading. Book Club Central is being designed to provide the public with the very best in reading. Book Club Central partners include *Booklist*, the book review magazine of ALA, and United for Libraries, a division of ALA. Get more information at www.ala.org. PL



Authors Bounce Back

By Brendan Dowling, PLA

In keeping with this issue's theme of fantastic failures, we turned to some of our favorite authors to see how they had navigated disappointments in their own careers. Their sympathetic yet heartening responses are below. To learn more about these authors and their creative process, visit PLA's interviews page at http://publiclibrariesonline.org/category/books-more/interviews.

Imbolo Mbue

Imbolo Mbue is the author of Behold the Dreamers *(2016), which was named a Best Book of the Year by* The New York Times, The Washington Post, *and* The Guardian.

Three years ago, I received an email telling me that a renowned literary agent was going to read my manuscript. The email came from the agent's assistant, who had read and loved the manuscript, and her enthusiasm for it (she called it "phenomenal") all but convinced me that her boss was going to love it, too, and offer to represent it. I stared at the email for minutes, incredulous: after sending out hundreds of query letters to agents all over the country and receiving dozens of rejection letters, was it possible I was finally going to get an agent? Would this story, which I'd been working on for almost three years and which I deeply believed in, finally get published?

The day after I received the email I called a close friend.

"You won't believe what just happened," I said.

"What?" she asked.

"A top agent who represents a writer I admire is going to read my work!"

"I told you!" she shouted. "I told you! You're going to have your book published and I'm going to have a friend who is a published novelist!"



Imbolo Mbue (photo © Kiriko Sano)

I asked her to curb her enthusiasm and not tell anyone yet, lest we jinx it, but by the end of the day, she had told almost everyone at her job that her friend's book was going to be published.

On March 31, 2014, the day the agent's assistant had promised me would be the day her boss made a decision about representing me, I checked my email approximately sixty times every hour. I tried to work on my other writing but couldn't focus. I wanted to go for a walk but couldn't bear to leave my computer. I sat staring at it, waiting for the email. When it finally came in, around five in the evening, it wasn't an offer of representation. It was a letter of rejection, the worst rejection letter of my career. The agent didn't think she could represent my work, her assistant wrote, but she thought I had potential and she wished me the very best with my endeavors.

I closed my computer shivering—I'd never been so hot and cold all at once. The next morning I couldn't get out of bed. When I finally did, I went grocery shopping and burst into tears in the checkout aisle.

"You can't give up," my friend said when I told her. "I know it hurts, but you came so close."

What do you know about coming so close? I wanted to shout at her. What do you know about what it's like to be inches away from the finish line only to have someone push you all the way back to the starting point?

I went to bed without eating dinner for a second night, but the next morning I woke up knowing my friend was right—I had to carry on.

About the Author

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Brendan is currently reading *Lush Life* by Richard Price.

So I went back to my computer and began rewriting.

Duncan Tonatiuh

Duncan Tonatiuh's books include The Princess and The Warrior: A Tale of Two Volcanoes *(2016)*, Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras *(2015)*, Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale *(2013)*, Diego Rivera: His World and Ours *(2011), and* Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation *(2014). His books have received the Sibert Award, the Pura Belpré (Illustrator) Honor Book, and* The New York Times *Best Illustrated Children's Book Award, among others.*

Getting my first book published was relatively easy. A professor of mine that really liked my artwork was good friends with a children's book editor and asked if she could show him some samples of my work. The editor, a man named Howard, liked my work and invited me to meet with him at his Abrams office. He told me that if he received a manuscript that suited my style he would get in touch. I told him I liked writing and that I was taking some writing classes in school. Great, he said, and told me some basic things about picture books.

Some weeks later I had the idea for a book about two cousins who write letters to each other; one cousin lives in a rural community in Mexico and the other lives in an urban center in the United States. I wrote the manuscript with rhymes, which I am not very good at, and sent it to Howard. He said very nicely that he liked the concept and illustrations and wanted to publish this book, but please, no rhyming. So I rewrote the manuscript and revised it several times until it became my first book, *Dear Primo*.

Half a year later, after I finished all the artwork for *Dear Primo,* I wrote another manuscript and sent it to Howard. But this time he said, "This is not the right project for us." I had assumed anything I wrote would become a book. I sent several more manuscripts, but Abrams did not like any of them. I had spent my advance from *Dear Primo* by that point and had to take on different odd jobs to pay the bills. I walked dogs, babysat, painted houses, tutored, and assisted a photographer. I felt very frustrated to work at jobs just because I had to and not because I was passionate about them.



Duncan Tonatiuh (photo by Miles Vidor)

More than a year later, I wrote the manuscript for *Diego Rivera*. Abrams liked it and it became my second book. I still had to do other jobs to supplement my income but I felt re-energized and motivated. After publishing a couple more books, I could dedicate myself to being a full-time author and illustrator. The thing I know now that I did not know when I was getting started is it takes time to build a career. I get manuscripts turned down all the time, and I always have to make several major revisions to my work, but it is part of the process. I feel very fortunate that I get to do something I love for a living. I want to continue making books, and I hope I have a long and productive career.

Lindsay Hunter

Lindsay Hunter is the author of Ugly Girls *(2014), listed as one of BuzzFeed's Best Books of the Year, and* Don't Kiss Me *(2013). Her next novel,* Eat Only When You're Hungry, *will be released in August 2017.*

When I graduated from college, I had a bachelor's in English and a vague notion that I might like to be a writer. Ahem, a Writer. My favorite professor was a poet, so I assumed I was also a poet. Plus, it seemed poets had a lot more fun with words than prose writers did. (I knew it all at age twenty-two!) I had no idea how to get from point A, a young idiot who wanted to be a Writer, to point B, more famous than Stephen King.

I decided applying to graduate school was a thing I could do, and I proceeded to apply to eight of the most famous programs. I felt proud of my poetry, and at the very least I believed it was fun to read, so I was confident I'd start seeing acceptance letters rolling in. I peppered my personal essay with stuff I filched from the *New Yorker* (cough, I name-dropped *Arshile Gorky*, cough). It all felt kind of distant but satisfying, an accomplishment even, like it feels to finally go to the dentist. I was going through the motions, acting the part, faking it till I could make it.

I was rejected by all eight schools.

That, my friends, was a line in the sand. That was eight schools telling me they didn't think I even had anything worth honing, nothing to offer, no promising starting place. It was like someone turned off all the noise, removed all the furniture, cleared all the clutter, and it was just me in my head—nothing to distract me but nothing to hold onto, either. What in the hell was I going to do?

My husband, who was then still my boyfriend, wrote me a letter in which he had pasted pictures of Carolina Panthers quarterback Jake Delhomme. The gist of his letter was that Delhomme went undrafted in the 1997 draft but went on to the Super Bowl in 2003. I was undrafted but I'd one day make it. You see why I married the man?

I realized I wasn't trying to go from point A to B, I was trying to go from A to Z. In the empty room that was my head, I realized I didn't know anything about anything. I might want to write fiction, too! I had to take it a lot slower. I had to figure out what I, what *I*, wanted to write. Did I even have anything to say? And that's honestly something I ask myself to this day. From the moment I decided I wanted to be a writer to the moment my first book was published, a decade went by. I spent ten years taking little steps, saying yes to



Lindsay Hunter (photo by Lili Calfee)

every opportunity, challenging myself to write the next thing, and the next thing, and the next… and never, ever name-dropping poor Arshile Gorky ever again.

Dave Reidy

Dave Reidy's fiction has been published by Granta and other journals. His novel The Voiceover Artist *(2015) was listed among Top Fall Indie Fiction titles by* Library Journal *and named a Midwest Connections Pick by the Midwest Independent Booksellers Association. Reidy's first book, a collection of short stories called* Captive Audience *(2009), was selected as an Indie Next Notable Book by the American Booksellers Association and published in French translation.*

The novel was supposed to change everything.

For several years, I had been rising early in the morning to write for an hour before hustling off to work a full day in a marketing agency. Despite the publication of my short story collection by a reputable press, I was an unknown, even in my hometown of Chicago. In short, my writing life was lived very much on the margins. The novel, though—if only in the mind of its author—was to deliver what the short story collection had not: a literary reputation and a reprieve, if only an impermanent one, from the stress and politics of office work.

My belief that the novel would change everything about my life was not rooted merely in the self-delusion required to write a book almost no one was waiting for. Indeed, something was different this time around: I had an agent.

When it was finished, I sent my agent the first draft of the novel. She had some deep concerns, but I had prepared myself for this disappointment. Who writes a publishable first draft of a debut novel? Not me. I started a full rewrite, one hour per day, six days per week, and kept at it for a year. Unfortunately, my agent didn't like the second draft, either. I mulled over her thoughtful notes and did another rewrite. This time, my agent was certain: she didn't see how she could sell this book, no matter how many characters I added or flourishes I deleted, no matter how many additional attempts I made to reconceive it. After three drafts and four years, the novel I had believed would change everything for me was dead in the water.

Though the agent was done with the novel, I found, to my surprise, that I wasn't. I still wanted its characters at the center of my marginal writing life. So I did what writers do: I rewrote the thing again, and I revised what I rewrote. When I had done the very best I could do on my own, I sent the manuscript to other agents and editors. Enduring long silences and brief rejections, I felt the novel, for which I had imagined so much success, hanging around my neck, an albatross-esque emblem of my failure.

Eventually, all the writing and rewriting paid off, though not in the all-transfiguring manner I had once envisioned.



Dave Reidy (photo by Michael Courier)

My novel found a good home. After being carefully edited, exquisitely designed, noisily published, and nationally distributed, the novel began (or, perhaps, continued) to do all a writer should ask of a book-length fiction: it made small but meaningful changes in the life of its author and, with some luck, in the lives of a few generous readers open to such a remote possibility.

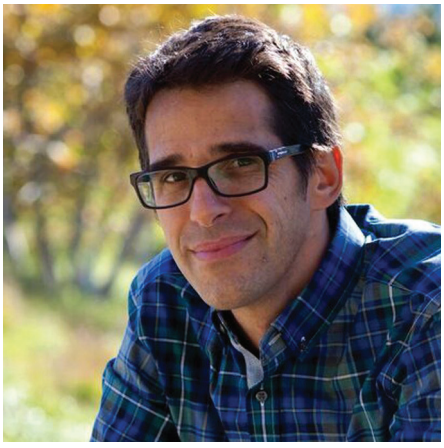
Ben Winters

Ben Winters's books include Underground Airlines *(2016),* The Last Policeman *(2012),* Countdown City *(2013), and* World of Trouble *(2014). His books have won the Philip K. Dick Award for Distinguished Science Fiction and the Edgar Award.*

Like a lot of writers, it took me some time to figure out what kind of writer I was. I must admit, I was pretty far afield when I started.

The mistake, so clear in retrospect (and aren't all mistakes?) was confusing who I am as a *writer* with who I am as a *person*. I presumed, in other words, that my persona as an author would be an extension of my personal style—but it's not. My fiction, in books like *Underground Airlines* and *The Last Policeman*, is dark, philosophical, sad, meditative, and at times violent. My personality (I think—can we fairly evaluate our own personalities?) is upbeat, optimistic, funny, even silly.

For most of my life, my attempts at art manifested as extensions of that personality. In college I did improvised comedy, which I loved and was good at; later I dabbled in standup, which I loved but was terrible at; my first stab at professional writing was as a librettist and lyricist in musical comedy—I thought I was great at it, but theater critics generally disagreed. When I turned to fiction it seemed obvious to me that lighter forms would be my thing. My first published novels were both essentially silly: *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* (a parody novel and the sequel to *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, another author's better and more successful novel); and *The Secret Life of Ms. Finkleman*, a zany middle-grade novel that HarperCollins Children's published



Ben Winters (photo courtesy of Joelle Delbourgo Associates)

and that my mom read and liked very much.

Both of these books lean into that comedic, jokey part of my personal style, which I had extended into my theater-writing career and presumed would extend onto the page. They're books I'm proud of (a good punchline isn't easy!) but which were leading me into a career that was neither particularly artistically satisfying nor putting me on the professional map.

Everything changed when I started writing *The Last Policeman*, a detective novel that had at its center a "bit" that was not at all comedic: it's a mystery set against the backdrop of impending apocalypse. Within the framework of that conceit, I found myself researching the structure of economies and civilizations, delving into complicated questions of fate and justice, and meditating on the meaning of life and the certainty of death. The work didn't radiate out from my personal style but from something much deeper—my sense of the world, the things I thought about or wanted to know more about. The resulting book was an expression not of how I presented myself to the world, but of who I actually was. This has proved a better path, and it's the one I've followed since.

Abby Geni

Abby Geni's debut novel The Lightkeepers *(2016) was named Best Fiction by the Chicago Review of Books Awards and longlisted for the 2016 Center for Fiction First Novel Prize. She is also the author of the short story collection* The Last Animal *(2013).*

The first novel I published was not the first novel I wrote. After my short story collection, *The Last Animal*, came out in 2013, I spent months on a novel that I loved dearly. I crafted and polished and honed it, but despite all my efforts, it turned out to be fundamentally flawed. The structure was soggy in the middle, the plot was knotted, and the characters were too intense. Eventually I had to set it aside.

As a writer, it can be hard to let go of something you've made—especially a novel, which encompasses years of your life and hundreds of pages and thousands of words. To me, it felt a little like the death of a loved one. I had to bury my book, and then I had to mourn. I didn't write for a few months. I didn't even read. I avoided fiction in all its forms, since every story reminded me of the novel I had lost.

This kind of failure is essential to the writing process. I was devastated at the time, but in retrospect, I see how much I gained. Without first writing a book that was full of mistakes—a book I had to abandon—I would never have found my way to *The Lightkeepers*, my debut novel. In crafting a book that failed, I figured out a million things I would never have discovered any other way. I had to take each risk, to try and stumble and flounder. You can't learn to write a novel by reading novels, or by reading about how other authors have written novels, or by reading short stories, or by writing short



Abby Geni (photo courtesy of the author)

stories. You can only learn to write a novel by writing one.

Eventually I reconnected with some of my childhood joy in story making. I went back to the very beginning: sitting down to write without expectation. When I was a kid, I plunked down at the computer every day simply because I loved to write. I didn't think about whether I would ever be published, whether my work would find an audience. I didn't wonder about results, only process. Writing a novel that failed brought me back to the idea of writing for myself, writing without hope or calculation, writing because life is bigger and richer with stories in it.

In the end, I remembered a few home truths. All writing is practice. I've been practicing this work since I was a child, and I'm still learning how to be a better writer. The novel that failed was practice for *The Lightkeepers*, which was practice for my new book, *Zoomania*, slated to come out in 2018. Each story is practice for the next one. Every crumpled page in the trashcan is important work. Every mistake is an object lesson. I'm glad I wrote a four-hundred-page-long novel that no one will ever read. I wouldn't give back one hour of my time, one sentence, one word. PL

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Facing Failure

By Kristy Pasquariello

When I first started working as a children's librarian in a public library, I had grand plans for the successful programs I would run: charming storytime tea parties at the historic branch of our town's library; after-school craft sessions based on a different fairy tale every week! I planned and I planned, I purchased supplies and painstakingly prepped materials for the elaborate crafts I envisioned. And then, on the afternoon of my very first special program, I stood expectantly at the entrance to the children's room and waited. And waited. And waited. That's right: no one came. Not a single soul ventured into the library that afternoon for my program. As a relatively new public librarian running my own programs, I felt pretty depressed about it. All of that work! All of those supplies! Was my idea bad? *Maybe I picked the wrong field*, I thought desperately.

Four years later, I have come a long way. I still cringe a little bit when I think about that program and the hours of effort I put into preparation. But I have realized that there are a lot of factors I didn't consider, or even know to consider, when I held that program. For instance, school gets out at 3:15 p.m. My program started at three. Parking and traffic in that part of town after school lets out is a total nightmare! Even if families wanted to come later, the traffic would have deterred many of them from trying. But more importantly, my advertising was less than stellar. I listed the program in the monthly paper calendar but nowhere else—not online, not with a flyer at the bustling main library, not even with a flyer at the branch where it was held.

My lack of expertise (and, ahem, common sense) at that time is somewhat embarrassing in retrospect. But that whole experience shaped my perspectives as I moved forward with my library career. Never again would I put so much time and effort and money into a program I had never done before and that no colleague had ever attempted either. I came to appreciate the value of failure as an unparalleled way to learn what doesn't work.

Why Is Failure So Hard to Admit To?

Much has been written about the numerous benefits to be had from a failed experience at work. It's widely thought of as a cliché in the business world to "embrace failure." There are, to-date, eight TED Talks about learning from failure. Experts extol the virtues of analyzing mistakes in order to avoid repeating them. Many managers have procedures and policies in place that are designed to help their employees embrace failure in the name of positive change. And yet, denying failure and a reluctance to admit defeat are still the norm, from healthcare to politics, from giant corporations to small-town public libraries.

Why is this? Has the saturation of social media, with its multitude of voices all clamoring to craft a perfect narrative of their lives, impacted our ability to admit defeat? Or has admitting failure always been difficult in an ultra-competitive world where perceived weaknesses might dog our careers and reputations? Sometimes refusing to admit failure can even have tragic consequences. Harvard University professor Amy Edmondson, writing in the *Harvard Business Review*, describes one of the most well-known cases of this type of failure, that of the 2003 explosion of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* that killed seven astronauts. NASA managers downplayed the significance of foam that had broken off the side of the shuttle during its launch. Rather than investigate further, as engineers suggested, they continued to overlook it, and ultimately missed the larger failure that led to the explosion.[1] Similar stories abound of people going to great lengths to avoid admitting an error, only to inadvertently cause a bigger error. We've all had that manager who insists on keeping a policy in place that is clearly not working.

In their 2007 book, *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts,* psychologists Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson discuss the idea of cognitive dissonance, the state of tension a person experiences when they hold two contradictory cognitions.[2] For example, a library manager who believes that she must approve every book ordered for the library while also decrying the slow pace of ordering at her library

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Kristy is currently reading *My Diary from the Edge of the World* by Jodi Lynn Anderson.

must be exhibiting extreme mental gymnastics to justify her micromanaging just to avoid admitting she was wrong.

More often than not, the reality of our overachieving culture is to avoid admitting failure at all costs. So when you have staked your career and reputation on a particular policy or theory, it takes a certain kind of bravery and confidence to take a stand and acknowledge failure.

Analyzing Mistakes

Now that we've established how hard it is to admit failure, let's look at all the benefits to be gained if we actually learn to do just that. While admitting personal failure is challenging, history has shown that most of us have no trouble recognizing the failures of others! Many a staff meeting and email chain has been devoted to analyzing what went wrong. Occasionally, blame is assigned and action items are drawn up. Collectively, we wonder what we can do to avoid making this mistake in the future. And then—nothing. All too often, things stay the same.

Edmondson asserts that, despite countless hours spent studying and analyzing failures in their organizations, many managers do not ultimately make any real changes. This is a result of managers thinking about failure the wrong way. Learning from failure is not as easy as it looks when applied to real-world situations. It's easy to point out what went wrong and vow to take a different approach in the future, but successfully following through can be challenging, especially if it involves breaking with long-held traditions.

This issue comes up often in the public library setting when it comes to public computers. Many libraries, concerned with the idea of children potentially stumbling upon upsetting images, have installed filters on computers that ostensibly "filter out" images and websites that the software deems inappropriate for a library setting. The vast majority of these filters do a terrible job and, in many cases, end up blocking harmless and important websites, as was the case at a town library where a filter consistently blocked the local middle school's website. More egregiously, Internet filters can prevent patrons from looking up information about important subjects such as breast cancer and sexual abuse. Despite complaints from patrons and a widely held belief that Internet filters fail to do their intended job to the detriment of patrons, their use persists. I see this as an example of a failed policy that we will ultimately have a hard time ending due to the fear of pornography in a library setting.

The faulty results of Internet filters bring to mind what Duke University professor Sim Sitkin calls "intelligent failures," or previously unexperienced situations from which new information is learned.[3] Pornography on public computers at the library is a pretty common reality. Filters, while a great idea in theory, are not reliable. But without trying them out and receiving consistent, frustrated feedback from middle schoolers and their parents, the librarians would have never known that such a problem could occur. As a result, they experimented with different filters and provided invaluable feedback to the software companies.

So what are the best strategies for learning from failure? After reading widely and considering the idea of failure in a variety of settings, I have extrapolated five simple but effective ideas to keep in mind when facing a failure.

1. Let Go of the Idea That Failure Is Always Bad

"Failure is so important. We speak about success all the time. It is the ability to resist failure or use failure that often leads to greater success. I've met people who don't want to try for fear of failing."—J.K. Rowling[4]

Failure can and often does lead to something good. We have already discussed the unfortunate tendency of our society to make more out of failure then it does out of success. Despite this, try to remember the duality of failure. Emma Caywood, a children's librarian, remembers a program she created at the request of her middle school patrons who wanted to be part of a theater club. Caywood spent a great deal of money and effort getting personal scripts made for the middle school kids and planning their dramatic table reads. But when the time came to do the program, not one of the middle schoolers made good on their promise to show up. Caywood was left with a stack of expensive personalized scripts. Her solution? Find another use for the materials within the library's community: she used the scripts for another theater program held at the middle school, a much more accessible location for the students. Caywood worked with an idea that initially felt like a failure, but ultimately inspired another exciting, better program.

2. Embrace Unpredictability

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."—Thomas A. Edison[5]

Working with the public is unpredictable. Patrons often bring their personal lives with them into the library, and the result is sometimes messy: disagreements happen, emotions get involved. Librarians who work with children learn to build unpredictability into their programs. I recall being heckled by a pack of seven-year-olds at a Halloween storytime because my books weren't "scary enough." So I ditched the books and led a costume parade instead. One public librarian I spoke with recalled a time she booked a musical performer at her library and had a room full of about 150 people waiting expectantly, but the performer never showed. Rather than dismiss the disappointed group, she quickly rallied a fellow librarian who played the guitar, and together they threw an impromptu jam session and dance party. What she learned from that experience, she explained, was to embrace unpredictability. Don't just expect it, build it into your plan! *Hope for the best, plan for the worst* is her new motto. This attitude also functions as a healthy alternative to fearing failure. It forces you to think about the worst that can happen, which can, in turn, foster creativity in ways you don't expect.

3. Consider Blame Carefully

"Failure isn't fatal, but failure to change might be."—John Wooden[6]

When things go wrong, it's easy—and some might say natural—to look elsewhere before looking at yourself when you assign blame. Why not try looking at failure a different way? While recognizing who was at fault for a particular policy or event, consider thanking them for bringing the organization to a place where they can recognize, analyze, and strategize techniques for future success. Doing so can only help lessen the fear of failure that is too often cultivated in the workplace. By making it a jumping-off point for discussion, you are also inviting your coworkers to more readily admit their own mistakes and failures so that growth can happen.

4. Recognize the Complexity of Failure

"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."—Robert F. Kennedy[7]

There is no one kind of failure. It comes in all shapes and sizes. When analyzing what went wrong, remember to look at the whole problem, from top to bottom. Who knew about the problem? When did we first become aware that something wasn't working? Public libraries are often understaffed and their librarians overworked. When considering a public library failure, look at all of the individuals involved. Did they have enough backup and regular breaks while working? Had they been properly trained for the job they were doing? Did a program have too many people? Was the line at the circulation desk twenty people deep? Maybe the Internet was slow or not working. Maybe a guest failed to show up. Most failures are complex; in order to best learn from them, it is essential to step back and honestly identify the various factors involved.

5. Sometimes the Only Way to Learn Is to Try and Fail

"Failures are finger posts on the road to achievement."—C.S. Lewis[8]

Whenever I recommend books to a patron, I always encourage them to not only try the two or three titles I suggest but also to come back and please, please tell me if they didn't work for them. After repeating this enough times to my regular patrons, they have finally gotten brave enough to do just that. "I hated this," they tell me sometimes. "You were really off the mark with this one." Great! Now I can mentally adjust that person's reading profile so that I can improve future recommendations. Reading recommendations are always a shot in the dark, no matter how good you think you are at giving them. But the willingness to try new authors, while it sometimes leads to failed interviews, can also lead to the discovery of a new favorite. To get there, however, the librarian and the patron must be willing to try and fail, sometimes several times, before getting to the right place.

Conclusion

Growth is not possible without failure. At the same time, it is important to remember not to let yourself get too caught up in what went wrong. Recognize, analyze, and strategize. And then move on! Don't dwell on the mistakes, or you will only find yourself going backward. Public libraries have had to adapt and change over the years to stay relevant and crucial in the lives of their patrons. Without a willingness to try new things and an acceptance that failure is part of all new endeavors, there is no way that libraries could continue to hold the revered space they still do in modern culture. After all, as *Peter Pan* author J.M. Barrie said, "We are all failures—At least, the best of us are."[9] PL

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Author Interviews on *Public Libraries* Online

Visit http://publiclibrariesonline.org/category/books-more/interviews to see Brendan Dowling's interviews with the authors featured in this issue's "Authors Bounce Back" feature (see page 17) and many more. Recent interviews include Booki Vivat (*Frazzled*), Adelia Saunders (*Indelible*), M-E Girard (*Girl Mans Up*), Jade Chang (*The Wangs vs. The World*), and others. Check it out! PL

How I Learned to Love Patrons Again

By Matt Smith

Hermann Hesse once wrote that "nothing in the world is more distasteful to a man than to take the path that leads to himself."[1] This is a story of self-critique, about finding a problem in myself and fixing it. This is also a story about changing the culture of libraries.

Imagine a team of alien anthropologists visiting libraries across America, including yours, to study the relationship between public libraries and patrons. They secretly watch your meetings, your water cooler banter, your interactions, your emails, your Staff Days. Clipboard in hand, they observe a depressing and paradoxical state of affairs, something we allow to happen every day in our public libraries all the time: patron bashing. They do a quantitative analysis on how we talk about patrons. They logically conclude that we must secretly hate the very people we serve.

Patron bashing—i.e. venting, ruminating, gossiping—might be the greatest failure when it comes to customer service and perhaps the greatest barrier to excellent customer service in libraries. It creates a toxic, negative environment that stunts innovation, wastes time, and waters down service. If that isn't bad enough, patron bashing is a drain on our mental and organizational health.

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Matt is currently reading *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race* edited by Jesmyn Ward.

Failing

I didn't always care about patron bashing. In fact, I was pretty darn good at it, if I do say so myself.

My first job at a public library was as a security guard. I was a young, bright-eyed future librarian who simply wanted to work in the sacred space that is the library. Growing up in a small town, I remember being surprised and shocked that security guards even existed at libraries. An optimistic person by nature, I thought it would be the most peaceful job in the world. Imagine my surprise at seeing people get drunk at the library, watch porn, overdose, and fight. I quickly and naturally devolved into the odd behavior that is patron bashing. Or rather, I simply adapted to my environment and followed the crowd. It became a ritual, something to kill time, something to laugh at, something to talk about with coworkers, friends, and family. Conversations began with common phrases: "You wouldn't believe. . . " or "So this patron today. . . " or "Did you read that incident report?" Patron bashing is fun not only at work and work events but even at personal gatherings. At family Christmas, I would tell my latest crazy patron story. I was a propaganda machine, peddling a false narrative: that the library is a crazy place with crazy people. "I didn't know that happened in libraries!" people gasp. "Oh yes," we reply with a grin, "all the time."

Learning

But that's simply not true. The whole thing is a crock, a sham, a failure in thinking. As a philosophy major, I've always been interested in fallacies and the psychology behind flawed thinking. Perhaps that's why I began to notice that something was wrong with me. Why was patron bashing suddenly a feature of my personality, part of my daily job description? I was supposedly an optimist. I had a patron bashing problem and I knew it. I began thinking more deeply about the phenomenon. Why do we do it? Is this healthy? We don't hate patrons. Most people that work in libraries are good people. How did we get here?

After becoming a librarian and serving patrons in a different capacity, I thought about the issue deeper. Complex phenomena usually have complex causes. I came up with a few broad explanations, all having to do with flawed thinking and unconscious

bias. All of these are well studied and affect our lives on multiple levels.

Negative Bias

To start things off, consider negativity (memory) bias. Psychology tells us that our memories much prefer negative events to neutral or positive experiences. This is a hard-wired evolutionary survival feature. Memory is not a truth machine or logbook. It's interested in survival, which means giving more weight to negative memories. It was more beneficial to remember the time our cousin was killed by a lion (lion = danger) rather than the time he *wasn't* killed by a duck, gazelle, or rabbit. Translation: we tend to remember negative patron experiences, we tend to forget positive patron experiences, and we rarely register neutral patron experiences (unmemorable by definition).

One day, I decided to put my negative memory to the test. I started a tally sheet with three columns: good, bad, and neutral experiences. I took it out to the reference desk for a couple shifts. Not surprisingly, the results were clear: life at the public service desk is quite pleasant and usually uneventful. My tally sheet had a significant number of good experiences, zero bad experiences, and mostly neutral experiences. I understand this tally fluctuates based on public service desk, but you get the point. An objective look at what really happens on a day-to-day basis is an enlightening exercise. It's not about forgetting, but remembering what you constantly are forgetting.

Confirmation Bias

The next explanation for patron bashing is the evil cousin of negativity bias: confirmation bias. The classic example is the researcher who only sees evidence that supports his theory and ignores evidence that contradicts it. In the library, after being tricked by our negative memory, we begin to form a philosophy or worldview about patrons: that in fact, these negative things are always happening and that patrons really are naughty. Equipped with that assumption—patrons are naughty—we selectively pick experiences that confirm that perspective while ignoring the ones that don't, bolstering our worldview, letting it slowly infiltrate our souls. At this point, we have fallen into the abyss, and it only gets deeper. Negativity bias and confirmation bias are powerful defects, affecting all aspects of personal and professional life.

I began to notice the interesting phenomenon of staff members obsessing over reading incident reports, that beautiful log of everything weird at the library. This is juicy patron gossip for the most part and, like reading the *National Inquirer* at the grocery store, it's kind of a guilty pleasure. Safety is one thing—and it's informative to know which patrons are banned—but religiously reading about the latest drunk person or torn-up book seems unproductive to me. I question the motive. This could easily lead to confirmation bias and the idea that tons of patrons are constantly transgressing. But statistics tell us that an infinitesimal amount actually break the rules. Ninety-nine percent of our patrons behave. What if we spent 99 percent of our time talking about *those* 99 percent? How would that affect customer service? Consider how many patrons are in your ILS right now. Consider how many people walk through the doors each day, each week. Now consider how many banned patrons you have (we have eighty-six).

Social Aspect

Next, I thought about the social aspect of patron bashing. Talking crap about patrons always involves co-bashers, coworkers, "co-ruminators" (as the literature would say). We need dance partners, and they are available, ready, willing, and part of the problem. I actually thought the social aspect was the point. I thought that patron bashing was good for camaraderie, relationship-building, or feeling better about an incident. I was wrong (more on that later). Sociology provides us with the concept of groupthink, the tendency of people to go with the flow rather than going against the grain or speaking up.[2] Listening to someone bash patrons is an exercise in groupthink: person A bashes, person B listens awkwardly, person C follows suit. Nobody wants to be rude, understandably so. But repeat the process, and patron bashing becomes the workplace culture, spreading like wildfire throughout the organization.

Society

Lastly, I thought about larger societal problems, many of which stem from flawed and biased thinking. These are unconscious biased perceptions shared by an entire culture.

Patron bashing reminded me of various *-isms*. Prejudice is fueled by false narratives and stereotypes about certain groups of people. Patron bashing is fueled by false narratives and stereotypes about patrons. More directly, patron bashing can be a form of disguised racism, a way to talk about ethnicities without seeming to. Lastly, patron bashing has an underlying hint of classism, of snobbery, of paternalism, of "I'm a smart librarian." You certainly see that in academic libraries as well.

Patrons are people. They are entitled to the empathy and respect that all people deserve—the more the better. Some people are homeless and poor and undereducated and struggle with mental illness, and that's important to understand as public servants. Patrons represent that same spectrum. But here's the point: it shouldn't matter when it comes to patron bashing. Treating people with respect and dignity is categorical and universal.

A New Path

The movie *Vanilla Sky* has a memorable line that speaks to the beauty and horror of free will: "Every passing minute is another chance to turn it all around."[3] Scary, but true. The effort to end patron bashing is a good opportunity to take advantage of that statement.

Learning about my flaws was enlightening to me, like I'd solved a problem or uncovered a secret. It was a small moral victory. The behavior made sense now. Understanding, for me, was a huge step towards changing my thoughts and behavior. Patron bashing doesn't have an on/off switch. In my case, I gradually stopped doing it (although to be honest, occasionally I still do). The more I thought about it, the less I did it. Armed with a little bit of knowledge and inspiration,

I began to do speaking gigs and Staff Days. I became "that guy that talks about patron bashing," a reputation that I awkwardly but humbly embraced. I talked to library staff, who agreed: patron bashing is killing our spirit of public service. We need to fall back in love with patrons.

What Science Says

The theory of venting, or letting off steam, has been with us since the Roman gladiators. Watching brutal sports was said to have cathartic effects, to release the aggression within us. Freud promoted the same cathartic model, imagining we were hydraulic machines, filled with fluids that build up. Today, the virtue of venting is common sense, a kind of folk psychology that everyone intuitively believes.

Except the hydraulic model is false.

To take my understanding to the next level, I collaborated with Samantha Minnis, a passionate and brilliant librarian from Grand Valley State University. Together we dove into the literature and learned more about the psychology of venting and what science had to say about it. We learned that science is oddly but overwhelmingly in agreement on the issue: venting and rumination is not good for anyone involved—not the person you are venting against, not you, not your coworkers, not even innocent bystanders that you could potentially harm. Article after article, study after study—we were actually shocked at the depth of treatment. Ruminating with colleagues is not a good way to build relationships, and it's not a healthy way to recover from a patron interactions.

Patron bashing comes in two different flavors. First, passively talking about patrons in a negative light. This is general and not tied to a specific negative experience or patron. Second, having a negative experience with a patron and subsequently ruminating and venting about it. The former is more prevalent but much easier to deal with—in fact, you can simply stop doing it. The latter involves emotions and is harder to deal with.

When it comes to dealing with negative patron interaction, we learned that not venting is a viable and simple option—anger can subside in as little as ten minutes.[4] We learned about cognitive reappraisal, or thinking constructively about a negative interaction rather than resorting to bashing. We shared our knowledge and experience and got great feedback from librarians throughout Michigan and Indiana.

Conclusion

When dealing with negative patron interactions, I find a lot of wisdom and solace in the old ancient moral philosophy of Stoicism, which teaches (a) controlling negative emotions with our mind and (b) not worrying about things that are beyond our control.[5] The perfect Stoic would never get angry at a patron—the emotion simply wouldn't trigger—but sometimes that's not realistic. We work on the emotion after the fact. We step aside, take a few deep breaths, and we let the emotion run its course. Venting is not required. We also understand that a patron's behavior is beyond our control. Whether a patron had a bad day or bad upbringing, we have no idea. We compassionately give them the benefit of the doubt, as we do for ourselves.

The easiest way to stop patron bashing is to stop bashing patrons. That's not enlightening or deep, but that's what I've come to believe personally. It starts with you. You don't have to go cold turkey. The most important thing is to never judge or look down upon your fellow colleagues for patron bashing or gossiping. Remember that it's a completely normal and natural thing. Compassionately refrain from it, politely have real conversations with people, even have respectful debates. Be real. I've had many friendly debates with colleagues; some still patron bash, some don't, and that's okay. Some agree on an intellectual level, others on an emotional level, others on a moral level. It's going to happen. At least my colleagues know where I stand, and that's all I can do. PL

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Contributing Editor **CATHERINE HAKALA-AUSPERK** is the owner of Libraries Thrive Consulting.

If you'd like to write a review or if there's a new book you'd like to see reviewed here, please contact Catherine at chakala ausperk@gmail.com.

Catherine is currently reading *The Whole Town's Talking* by Fannie Flagg.

Editor's note: Public Library Association policy dictates that PLA publications not be reviewed in this column. Notice of new publications from PLA will generally be found in the PLA News section of *Public Libraries*.

By the Book reviews professional development materials of potential interest to public librarians, trustees, and others involved in library service.

The Power of Play: Designing Early Learning Spaces

By Dorothy Stoltz, Marisa Conner, and James Bradberry; Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014; 224p.; $55; ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-1255-3; LC: 2014021159

The last decade has shown a growing focus on early learning efforts. Laying the building blocks of learning into place before a child gets to school is no longer a recommendation but a necessity. And one of the best methods of supporting these efforts is through play. Where libraries fit into these efforts is often up for debate. Play is loud and it takes up space and means engaging more staff than just the children's librarian, which means that resources and library policy will need to adapt to incorporate the play dimension into the library.

In *The Power of Play*, Stolz, Conner, and Bradberry seek to provide an introduction to bringing play to the library through play-and-learn spaces, dedicated library spaces expressly for those taking their first steps into learning. This book, featuring wonderful pictures and valuable appendices, helps to address the questions and concerns that arise when a library begins such play-driven efforts.

Particular attention is paid to large-scale story spaces, but the authors are always mindful of smaller efforts in libraries where construction is not feasible. For those libraries and librarians making their initial foray into early learning spaces, this book will prove valuable.—*Crystal Faris, Director of Youth & Family Engagement, Kansas City (MO) Public Library*

Digitizing Your Collection: Public Library Success Stories

By Susanne Caro, Sam Meister, Tammy Ravas, and Wendy Walker; Chicago: ALA Editions, 2016; 176p.; $55; ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-1383-3; LC: 2015032866

How do we prepare the library to serve patrons who are becoming increasingly accustomed to receiving and retrieving information from the Internet? It is a big question that *Digitizing Your Collections: Public Library Success Stories* helps to confront. One answer lies in digitizing collections. This ALA Editions book showcases the latest trends and figures for the future of digitization and is recommended for any institution, library or otherwise, looking for initial direction on digitizing collections. It would also be useful for those seeking persuasion, or advice on persuasion, on the significance of digitization.

Digitizing Your Collections establishes a comprehensive seven-chapter overview of just about everything you need to know when initiating digitization projects, from what to consider before digitizing, to digitizing copyrighted materials, to overcoming staff and funding limitations, to ultimately marketing the collections themselves. The articulation of best practices and examples in a clear, straightforward, and compelling manner is one of the strongest aspects of *Digitizing Your Collections* and, in hands less capable than Caro et al., could easily become confusing, complicated, and boring. Statements or recommendations are well-argued and supported with success stories or models.

In her introduction, Susanne Caro outlines the three main reasons why you should digitize: Expectation, Access, and Preservation (p.xii). In this respect, ef-

fective digitization is the natural, and expected, continuation of the central mission of any worthwhile library. Our role has always been about anticipating and providing for the needs of the public. *Digitizing Your Collections* offers the means and the methods to help ensure our responsibility to our patrons, and our future.—*Gregory Stall, Adult Reference Librarian, New York Public Library*

Inspired Collaboration

By Dorothy Stoltz, with Susan M. Mitchell, Cen Campbell, Rolf Grafwallner, Kathleen Reif, and Stephanie Mareck Shauck; Chicago: ALA Editions, 2016; 200p.; $50; ISBN-13: 978-0838913963; LC: 2015036458

Dorothy Stoltz's *Inspired Collaboration* examines the benefits of library partnerships and how to support and sustain them within the community. Written by Stoltz and a small group of librarians and community partners, the book draws on first-hand experience to suggest ways libraries can create a culture of collaboration within their organization and beyond. The book is divided into four parts, with questions and discovery points that encourage reflection. Appendices include worksheets, accountability tools, and suggested readings that can facilitate planning and inspire collaboration.

Part One asks the critical questions: *Why collaborate*? *What is the essence of collaboration?* And *what is the library's role in collaboration*? The authors identify the purpose of libraries as providing a practical sense of enlightenment for communities. To achieve this purpose, one must consider how partnerships can add value to a library's mission and how working together can benefit community organizations. The authors provide tips for healthy community partnerships, including sharing resources, building on existing relationships, and other practices that encourage collaborative thinking.

Additional sections highlight strategies for cultivating discernment and meeting community needs. These chapters draw on several public library programs that illustrate such strategies, including library café discussions and early literacy initiatives like Racing to Read and Every Child Ready to Read. Although the focus is largely on early childhood programs, the same methods can be used to plan other types of programs.

In addition to these programs, the authors highlight the accomplishments of leaders such as Andrew Carnegie, Fred Rogers, and Benjamin Franklin. Their accomplishments demonstrate the potential of collaborative partnerships and the recognition of community needs. Carnegie's and Franklin's work developing libraries and Rogers's work with children's television are just a few of the many examples the authors invoke throughout the book to inspire planning and implementation.

The authors draw upon similar methods of motivation. Chapters describe the need to spark curiosity amongst staff and the community as well as to overcome adversity. Several programs address the notion of the library as an incubator for new tools and technologies. These technologies offer new learning opportunities for professionals, students, and families and can serve as the basis for new partnerships.

Inspired Collaboration is a timely book as many libraries are now turning outward based on the Harwood Institute's model of community engagement. The book offers various resources that can assist libraries in this process, from preliminary steps to meeting challenges and celebrating success. All the questions, comparisons, and practical examples blanket the text with points of insight and reflection. —*Michael Cherry, Teen & Youth Librarian, Evansville Vanderburgh (IN) Public Library*

Digital Photo Magic: Easy Image Retouching and Restoration for Librarians, Archivists, and Teachers

By Ernest Perez; Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2016; 186p.; $49.50; ISBN-13: 9781573875134; LC: 2015031259

In high school, I took a photography class and learned how to make photos come to life in a dark room. It was hard work that required hours of labor to get the desired effect. Today, photos can be snapped, edited, and shared in a matter of seconds. *Digital Photo Magic* is all about fast and easy ways to do this on a Windows PC using free or inexpensive software.

Perez is an academic librarian with a background in journalism and is a self-described "amateur photographer" (p.181). True to his academic roots, Perez has written a well-researched and extremely detailed book, the crux of which is detailing how photographs can be improved with different editing techniques like cropping, resizing, rotating, and applying color filters. Perez also covers more advanced techniques like smart removal, which permits editors to alter unwanted aspects of a photograph, such as removing a person blocking a clear landscape shot of the beach, clearing up someone's skin if there is a blemish, or colorizing an old black-and-white photograph.

This book is a good introduction to photo editing for those with little to no previous experience with a computer, and it may also generate some ideas and inspiration. For example, after learning about smart removal technology, I searched some apps on my phone that let me selectively remove people from my photographs without leaving a trace. Twenty years ago, my mother would have loved this when she was editing out her ex-husband from family photographs the old-fashioned way—with scissors.

In truth, the average teen has already mastered all the techniques in this book and more with their smartphone. The book does not discuss apps in any way, despite their being, arguably, the epitome of the idea behind digital photo magic. This is definitely a major shortcoming. There are so many apps that make it even easier than ever before to enhance photographs. Apps like "BeautyCam" instantly apply a flawless skin tone and glamour magazine effects, thus precluding the need for editing on a PC.

Despite its limitations, *Digital Photo Magic* is worth skimming over for those of us who can still reminisce about the dark room days. At the very least, the author

maintains a website (www.update4dpm.com) with a huge bibliography of online resources (450 links), which is sure to make any librarian drool. Modern technology, isn't it magic? *—Kacper Jarecki, Manager, Queens (NY) Library at South Hollis*

Real-World Teen Services

By Jennifer Velásquez; Chicago: ALA Editions, 2015; 136p.; $50; ISBN-13: 978-0838913420; LC: 2015004192

Jennifer Velásquez has written a practical, no-nonsense manual for teen services librarians. This is no idealized presentation of picture-perfect teen programs: Velásquez has real-world experience in serving teens, and she aims to impart the knowledge she's gained to libraries and librarians who work with this unpredictable population.

Defined as ages thirteen to eighteen, teens are a difficult group to serve. There is no single reason for the difficulties because, like teens themselves, providing services for them is complex. Public librarians already prepare for the onslaught following the school dismissal time. While young children receive smiles and welcomes when entering a library, the response to teens is often different. Gone is the old model of teens coming into the library and sitting quietly while conducting research or completing their assignments. More than likely, teens will be a bit noisier than the average adult patron. Even so, they deserve and expect a good experience in the library.

Velásquez offers six practical chapters: "Teen Library Space," "Teen Library Programming," "Crafting Service Dynamics and Modeling Service Strategies," "Rules, Conduct Code, and Behavior," "Access, Control, and Privacy," and "Lightning Round: Addressing Common Issues and Concerns." Each chapter proposes a common-sense approach to dealing with teens. Sage advice from Velásquez encourages teen librarians to shy away from trends and to move toward service.

"Service" is the key word throughout the book. Caution is given to librarians who plan without input from their patrons. Velásquez cites an experience when an enthusiastic teen librarian spent time and energy on a program that no one attended. The planning for the program was done in isolation, without suggestions from the teens themselves. When teen patrons are included in the planning, they develop a sense of ownership, and the likelihood of an event's success increases. Above all, Velásquez encourages flexibility when dealing with teens. There is no predicting how they will respond to various programs.

Perhaps the most important piece of advice is for librarians to be teen advocates. It is not unusual for professional librarians and paraprofessionals to feel intimidated or overwhelmed by a teen audience. Velásquez encourages librarians who work with teens to set the tone of their interactions, modeling respect for the young patrons.

This book is not full of gimmicks. It presents a positive image of how the library can serve a specific population. Every youth services librarian can turn to this book for a philosophical understanding of working with teens. It is easy to feel isolated and to forget what to do. Read and reread this book. It has pearls of wisdom, and the practical conversation it promotes will come in handy when serving teen patrons.*—Ellen Hunter Ruffin, Curator and Associate Professor, de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi* PL





Contributor **GALINA VELGACH** is an Editorial Assistant for the Public Library Association in Chicago.



If any new library products have caught your eye lately, please contact Galina at gvelgach@ala.org.



Galina is currently reading *The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes.

New Product News delves into the world of library vendors, products, and services to find the standouts that combine innovation and quality.

This issue of *Public Libraries* deals not only with confronting professional failings, but also with learning from them. This New Product News column features products and services that can help libraries improve on common shortcomings.

Internal Communication and Project Management

A shared pitfall for any business organization is a lack of effective communication or project oversight. Libraries are no different. Whether its revamping the marketing department or launching a new program or policy, librarians need to be productive and accountable to one another. These services offer focused and adaptable solutions for pervasive communication issues.

Wrike

Wrike (www.wrike.com) is an award-winning online collaboration platform with four customizable packages for different teams: marketing, creative, project management, and product development. Each package's basic features allow teams to store and manage files; live edit and collaborate on files and documents; manage contacts and resources; organize schedules and timelines; and track deadlines, employee timesheets, and budgets. The platform is easy to tailor, widely used apps and services integrate seamlessly, and it syncs across devices.

The goal of the platform is to increase team productivity, transparency, and accountability; its adaptable scope makes it a good tool for individual departments to use, as well as for small-scale or short-term projects.

It is free for up to five users; $9.80/user/month up to fifteen users; or $24.80/user/month up to twenty users.

Slack

Slack (www.slack.com) is a more targeted internal communication platform, organizable by both project and team. Staff can communicate through group and private messaging, as well as video and audio conference calls, and syncing across devices makes for effortless team-wide memos. Basic features include file sharing and file management, but one of its most notable elements is that every account is "mega-searchable," so finding archived files and communications is simplified.

Slack enables teams to build up their account to suit individual projects and needs. In addition to the core features, the platform integrates with hundreds of free or inexpensive apps and extensions.

Slack claims to increase internal transparency and reduce (and improve) internal e-mails—in other words, each communication is more direct and effective from the start. Its streamlined format and extreme adaptability makes it ideal for small teams planning projects, events, and programs.

It is free for any sized team to use, stores ten thousand most recent messages, and offers 5GB of total storage; it costs $6–8/user/month for extended allowances.

Streamtime

Streamtime (https://streamtime.net) is a basic yet comprehensive management tool, usually used by small businesses but applicable to libraries. Easy-to-track

employee timesheets, budgets, invoices, reports, and task managers facilitate team and project oversight.

Streamtime charges a flat $15/user/month rate but offers a two-week free trial.

Staff Relations

A close work community and culture is essential for productive work days. Investing in these programs and services can be the key to fostering and maintaining healthy professional relationships.

Fitbit Challenges/Group Health Scheme

"New year, new you" goes the mantra—but it is often quickly forgotten. Opt into or take inspiration from Fitbit challenges, like being the first to reach ten thousand steps in a day or running the most miles in a weekend. Setting group fitness goals boosts personal and team motivation, cultivates healthy competition, and rallies employees—all of which serve to improve interpersonal relations.

Fitbits are pricey investments (the most basic Zip pedometer is $59.99), but bulk purchase discounts are available. A more affordable alternative is organizing a group health scheme, either through Fitbit or internally, and awarding the winner(s) of a challenge with a piece of wearable tech.

Lumosity for Teams

Lumosity is a relatively well-known free online service that offers "brain-training workouts." Playing brain games is thought to improve skills like memory, cognition, attention, but it's also a fun activity. Though it is less strenuous than group exercise, it can be just as effective at bringing a team closer together.

Lumosity for Teams (www.lumosity.com/teams) allows for ten to two hundred users. The team package costs $4/user/month, making it more affordable than the individual paid subscription.

GooseChase

Goose Chase (www.goosechase.com) is an app-based service that aptly describes itself as a "scavenger hunt for the masses." Teams of up to five are assigned customizable "missions" ranging from target destinations, collection objectives, and trivia. Organizers can choose from a list of over a hundred existing missions or create new ones to suit their teams' needs.

The user-friendly service is simple to tailor for group activities, especially for professional development or team-building days. GooseChase only requires one team member to have an iPhone or Android for the app, so players without smartphones can still participate.

The "recreational" package is free to use for up to five teams (twenty-five users total).

Budgeting and Accounting

Libraries without a dedicated bookkeeper or accounting department can face a host of problems. For small libraries, or for libraries needing to compartmentalize for specific projects or programs, these bookkeeping services provide both basic and advanced account support.

Zoho Books

Zoho Books (www.zoho.com/us/books) is an accounting service that allows organizations to automate banking and finances. It links with most federal and established local banks (Note: it is not FDIC-insured), and tracks budgets and cashflow, and can be set up to send out alerts if income is low or expenses go over budget.

Books integrates with PayPal and Square, and add-ons include an inventory trackers and a two-way subscription manager. The automatic functions eliminate the need for most data entry, making the service a good fit for libraries that need a minimal level of accounting support.

Zoho Books' basic package allows two users (one administrator and one accountant) to network with fifty contacts and set up invoices, expense trackers, and automatic functions for $9/month. The standard package offers extensions and additional features for $19/month. The service is free to try for two weeks.

FreeAgent

FreeAgent (www.freeagent.com) is a comprehensive accounting service based out of Edinburgh that centers around a user-friendly design. Its Dashboard feature allows for accessible oversight of estimates, invoices, expenses, projects, time tracking, payroll, and taxes. The service is completely customizable for a library's needs.

The award-winning platform is used by both qualified accountants and de facto bookkeepers of small organizations. Non-professional accountants can learn best practices from the website's guides and blog, full of tutorials, videos, and fact-sheets curated by seasoned professionals. For a smooth transition, FreeAgent imports contacts and information from most other accounting systems, even Excel spreadsheets, and it integrates with other payment and analytical software.

After a thirty-day free trial, FreeAgent costs $12/month for six months, then $24/month. PL

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What Our Readers Are Raving About Right Now

We asked a few *PL* readers to share something they are really into–newly discovered or recently rediscovered books, apps, films, music, events, or other sources of inspiration, including Internet memes, websites, or just items from the cultural zeitgeist. Questions or comments? Contact *PL* Editor Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org.



JUSTIN SNOOK
Director, Simon Fairfield Public Library (MA)

The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog (2016) by Adam Gidwitz, blows everything else out of the water when it comes to my favorite book of last year. It isn't often I see a book written for children that has equal or greater appeal for adults, but this book strikes all the right chords. It is a well-written, humorously told, wonderful message surrounded by beautiful margin artwork that manages to take itself just seriously enough to leave a lasting impression.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU'RE RAVING ABOUT!
If you would like to be featured, tell us what you're excited about right now in 100 words. Include a high-resolution JPG headshot and send to *PL* Editor Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org for consideration. PL



GAVIN J. WOLTJER
Library Director, Billings (MT) Library

Two books I recently read that highlight the tenacity of an individual overcoming a professional setback are ***All the Gallant Men: The First Memoir by a USS Arizona Survivor*** (2016) by Pearl Harbor veteran Donald Stratton, and ***House of Nails: A Memoir of Life on the Edge*** (2016) by former professional baseball player Lenny Dykstra. In each case, the gritty reality of a setback is underscored by the determination and effort needed by the individual to regain a sense of normalcy, and by the powerful narration used to convey their story. Fascinating reads!



ANDREW HART
Reference Librarian II, Ohio BWC Library

I recently stumbled across an amazing app called **Wunderlist** (www.wunderlist.com). You can use it to keep track of professional goals, meetings, and due dates. If you are a goal-oriented person like me, and need gentle reminders to keep you on track professionally, this is the app to download.



TIMOTHY B. HAGEN
Library Director, Ida Rupp (OH) Public Library

I have had a great privilege of having worked in various Ohio public libraries during my career, and **Ohio's regional and state professional organizations** are renowned for their progressive support. That said, when hitting some workplace roadblocks (whether project-, personnel-, or managerial-related) it can be occasionally refreshing to look beyond the library profession for guidance. Seek out your regional (in my case, Toledo) nonprofit resource center for workshops and training; they can offer an invaluable chance to network and gain perspective from outside the library field. Also, staff and I have recently referred to a few books: *What Motivates Me* (2014) by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton, *StrengthsFinder 2.0* (2007) by Tom Rath, and *Crucial Conversations* (2002) by Kerry Patterson et al. All three investigate the meaning of teamwork and collaboration as well as explore ways in which we think and perform differently.

Reshma Saujani to Speak at 2017 ALA Annual Conference

Since 2012, Girls Who Code has taught computing skills to and inspired more than 10,000 girls across America—and the organization is just at the beginning of its mission to close the gender gap in tech. Reshma Saujani, the founder and CEO of the national nonprofit organization, is also the author of the 2013 book *Women Who Don't Wait In Line: Break the Mold, Lead the Way*, in which she advocates for a new model of female leadership focused on embracing risk and failure, promoting mentorship and sponsorship, and boldly charting your own course. She will speak at the opening general session of the 2017 ALA Annual Conference on Friday, June 23, from 4 to 5:15pm, at McCormick Place in Chicago. Get more information at http://2017.alaannual.org. PL



Every CHILD Ready to READ®
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New! Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® Toolkit for Serving Early Childhood Educators

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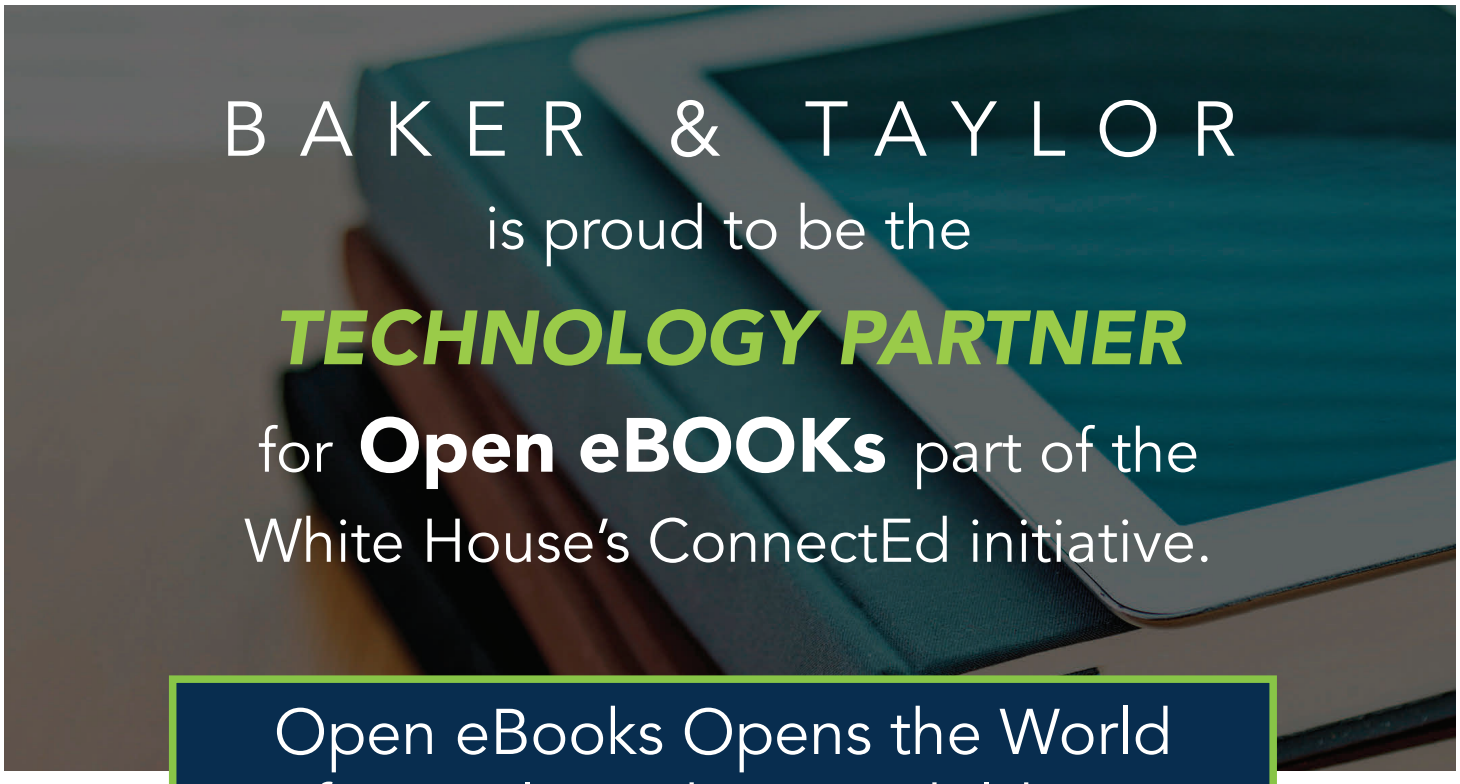
www.everychildreadytoread.org



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