



## PLAYING in The GAP: Transforming Our Relationship with FAILURE

I often bless the teacher I never met, who once upon a time had a pottery student who struggled to make a perfectly round pot.

George and I were fellow participants in a personal growth group back in the early '90s. One evening he shared about how his teacher had seen him struggling in pottery class earlier that day. When she asked him what the trouble was, he explained with exasperation, "I'm trying to make a perfectly round pot!"

What she said to him next changed my life.

"Ah, but George -- *in perfection, there's no Life.*"

At the time I was a practicing (and suffering) Perfectionist. And in five second-hand words I suddenly found myself freed from that prison.

In a flash, my relationship with what I call The GAP -- and with it, my entire life -- changed forever.

The GAP is the distance between what we want, dream of, hope for, or value ... and the reality of where things are at, right now.

Maybe you're like me: I was taught to see The GAP as A Problem, as the measure of What's Wrong -- with you, with me, with "them," with the world. It was BAD. It was FAILURE. And it desperately needed FIXING.

YESTERDAY.

In the moment I heard "*in perfection, there's no Life*" I realized that, whether it's the distance between a perfect pot and an imperfect one; between our vision for restorative justice and how we currently respond to human errors in our culture\*; between who I long to be and who I actually am (what I'm capable of) right now; or between the reverence for all Life that I long to see in The World and the relative disaster of where that's at on the planet right now ....

*THE GAP is the room that makes it possible for us to imagine, discover, play, create, mourn, expand, commune, forgive, transform, transcend ... and every other Human thing we do.*

If there were no GAP -- if everything was already "perfect," already the way we wish and hope and dream it could be -- well then, there would be nothing for us to do here, in this life. And nothing would ever change, and we would probably all want to simply die from boredom.

The great irony of our culture's view of The GAP as the measure of "What's Wrong" is that we Human Beings are Creators: as soon as we close one GAP, I hope we take some time to celebrate and luxuriate in our achievement for a while ... and then, inevitably, we're on to the next thing. On to the next creation.

Because that's what Creators do. They create.

And the fact of the matter is, there can be nothing new, nothing more, nothing deeper, nothing created, without first a GAP.

***This is the respiration of a human life: create a GAP, live into closing it, celebrate; create a GAP, live into closing it, celebrate; create a GAP, live into closing it, celebrate.***

***And with each cycle of dreaming and Real-izing and celebrating, new possibilities and new dreams and new passions come into view. New LIFE. New aliveness.***

When we come into a new kind of relationship with failure and begin to embrace it as The GAP ...

when we learn how to welcome and celebrate The GAPs that our vision, love, and devotion create in our lives...

we become free again to explore, discover, play, create, ***and fail*** with a lighthearted joy, curiosity, and freedom that our old view of failure and The GAP -- as the measure of "What's Wrong" -- could never bring us.

And, since we all know there really is no perfection in this human life, it seems sensible (not to mention an enormous relief) to finally acknowledge what that means:

***there is always going to be a GAP.***

So, "failure" is more like the air we're constantly breathing than a problem: it's essential, constant, and represents something that deeply calls to us and even feeds us.

When we realize this, we can finally let go of torturing ourselves, trying to achieve the "perfection" that we already know is not only impossible, but not really even desirable. (If we ever wonder why we get so exhausted or irritable, there's one potent place to look.)

Awakening to the gift that The GAP is in my life allowed me to take my first real step away from the debilitating relentlessness of the perfectionism that I inherited ... and then continued to perpetrate on myself and those around me for the first decade of my adulthood.

Changing my relationship with failure and with The GAP was my first step toward returning to a world where *I am already enough*, where there's Room for me to be All That I Am, just as I Am -- fully human, with all my "warts and farts and ugly parts," all my unconscious, automatic self-protections, and all my glorious, wondrous gifts...

fully seen, acknowledged, allowed, welcomed, and embraced.

**By me**, first and most of all.

With my new relationship with failure and with The GAP, it became possible for me to **receive my own imperfections -- my own ongoing failures -- with warmth and compassion** ... which, according to the latest findings in brain science (Interpersonal Neurobiology), turns out to be **the single most powerful thing we can do, to catalyze our own healing and growth**.

So: I officially notice that you, me, everybody else, and the whole world are all deliciously, welcomingly imperfect and constant failures. And I claim for us all this GAP, this amazing stage that gives us endless room to play and create, on which Life invites us -- **longs for us** -- to declare and enact our most cherished vision, love, and devotion.

What can you relax about, let go of, fall in love with again, become inspired by now, when you look at The GAPS in your life?

What could it mean for you and for your relationship with failure, to let go of dreams of perfection and **let yourself express your love and begin to play in the GAP?**

I'd love to hear your comments, insights, struggles, and triumphs, on this amazing, annoying, expanding Human journey. Please share below!

Blessings on us all,

Vika



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\* Visit <http://bitly.com/thriving-life-baremba> for a lovely illustration of what's possible.