

Image:  
Grégoire Japiot, Flickr



# EPIC FAIL

Because ordinary failure just wasn't enough.

# Reflecting on & Reducing Failures

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Image: Ricardo Villar, Flickr



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Images Cropped: Davi Chrzastek & Anthony Quintano Flickr



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Image: Ignacio Munguía, Flickr












# The HSA Innovation Office

The San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) helps those experiencing poverty and abuse. For us, innovation = empathy + experimentation + evaluation. These are some of our stories & lessons learned.

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Image: <http://sfhsainnovationoffice.tumblr.com/>

# Generic Service Design Template

FRONT END	Before	Aware	Access/Onboarding			Maintain		Finish/Next Steps		
										
		Website	Call	Lobby	Waiting	Mail	Chat	Call	Text	Email
BACK END	Internal Processes, Culture & Assumptions (i.e., success metrics, “best practices,” etc.)									

Innovation Office



STORIES

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Image: Chris Blakeley, Flickr



**! WARNING**



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Image: Atomicity, Flickr

FREEDOM

FREEDOM

FREEDOM

FREEDOM

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Image: Osajus, Flickr



You may have...

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Image: Véronique Debord-Lazaro, Flickr

An aerial photograph of a city, likely San Francisco, taken during a golden sunset. The sky is filled with bright, glowing clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, orange light over the entire scene. In the foreground, a river flows through the city, with a bridge crossing it. A white boat is visible on the water. The city buildings are silhouetted against the bright sky, and the overall atmosphere is serene and dramatic.

## Big Picture

- A Note on the Privilege of Failure Talk
- Our Failure Stories (anchor)

1st: Social Work & Writing

2<sup>nd</sup>: Human-Centered Design

3<sup>rd</sup> : Behavioral Economics

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Image: Shellmush, Flickr



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Image: Code for America

# Learning Lab

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The sound of failure  
takes many forms.

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Image Cropped: Börkur Sigurbjörnsson, Flickr



But then...

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Image Cropped: Börkur Sigurbjörnsson, Flickr



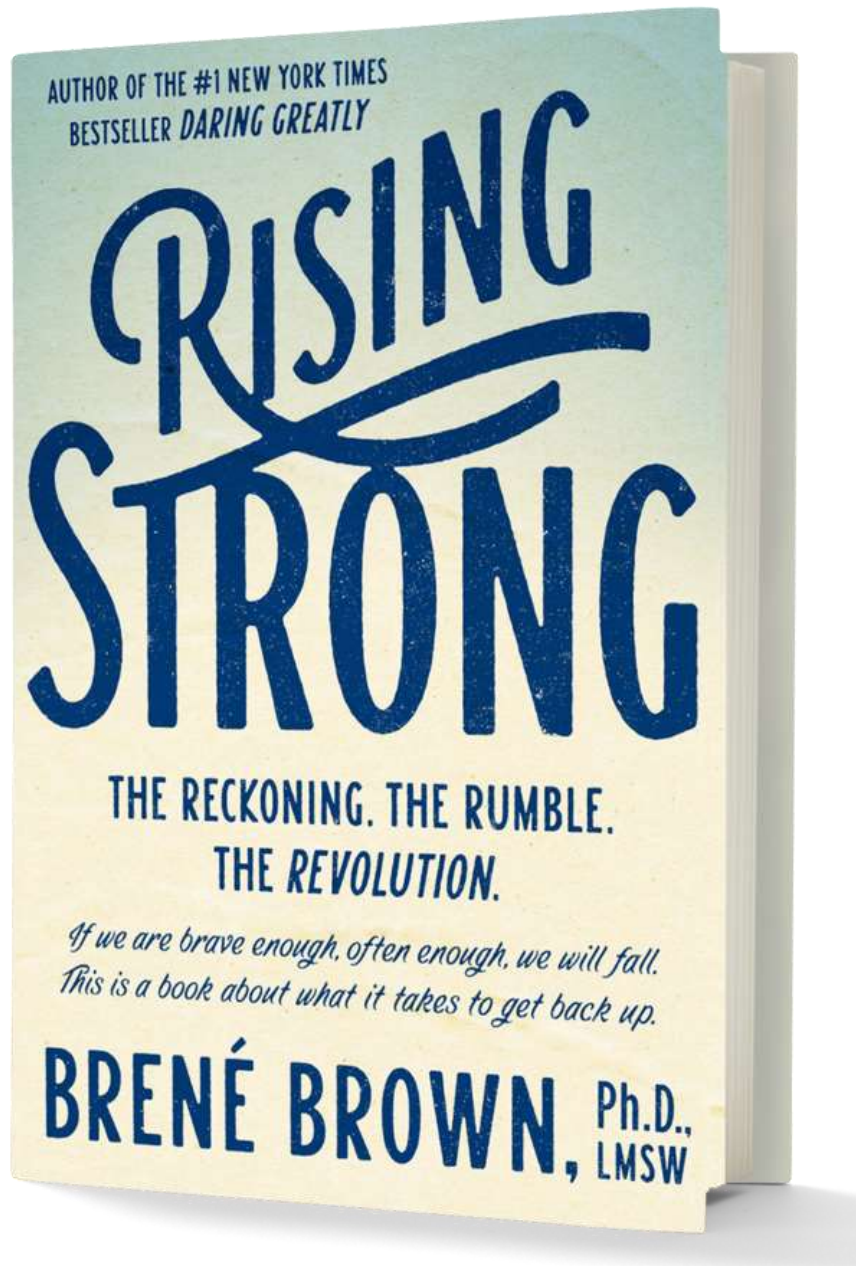
# Problem-Based Approach



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Image: Marc Hébert

# 1<sup>st</sup> Activity



Deal with emotional side of failure before learning from it or glorifying it at conferences.

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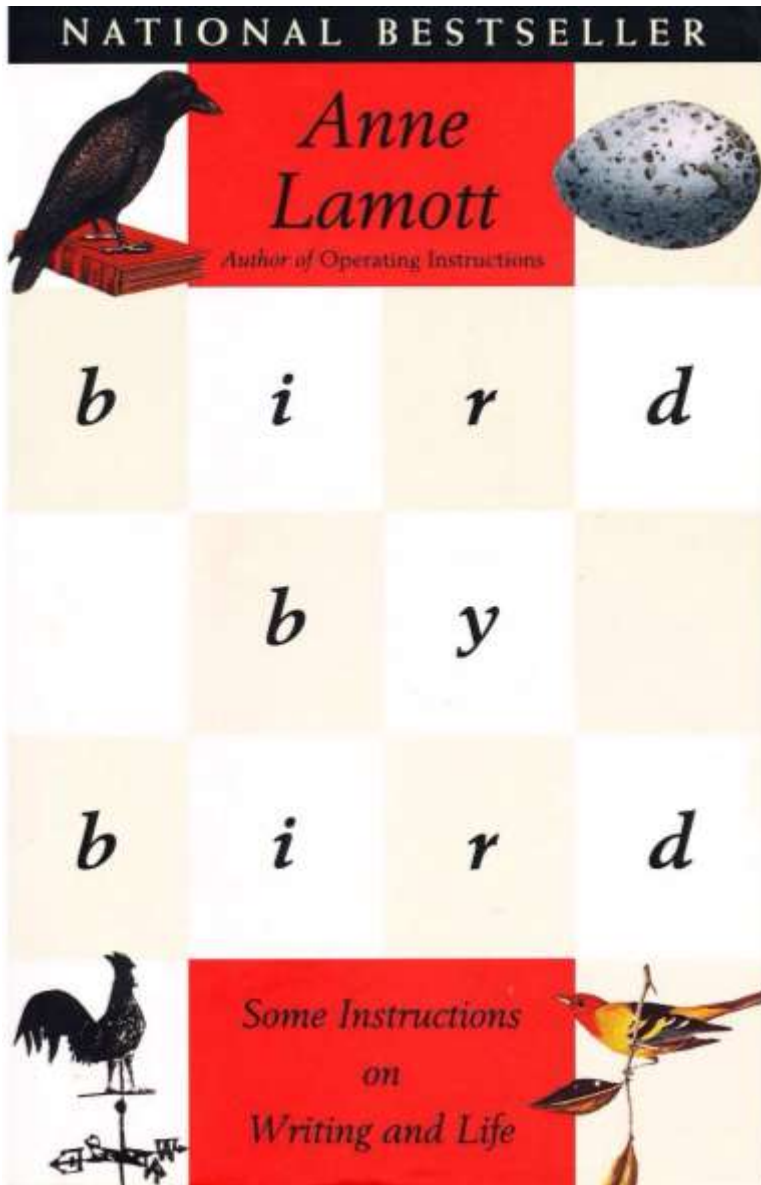
Image: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54ef41f6e4b0e4d4f1ecd092/t/5568ba06e4b0182dddbdc3f5/1432926755852/>

# Cesspool of Emotional Ugliness



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Image: Les Chatfield, Flickr



“Stormy First Draft”  
~A. Lamott

“The story I’m  
telling myself is...”  
~B. Brown

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Image: <http://toolsandtoys.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/image22.jpg>

# 1<sup>st</sup> Activity

Write down the “Stormy First Draft” of how you’ve been describing one failure to yourself. Choose something that still stings.

Start by writing...”The story I’m telling myself is...”

Questions? Spend 3 min.

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Adapted From: Brené Brown, *Rising Strong*, 2015 & Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, 1980.

If we were all to sit in a circle and confess our sins, we would laugh at each other for lack of originality.

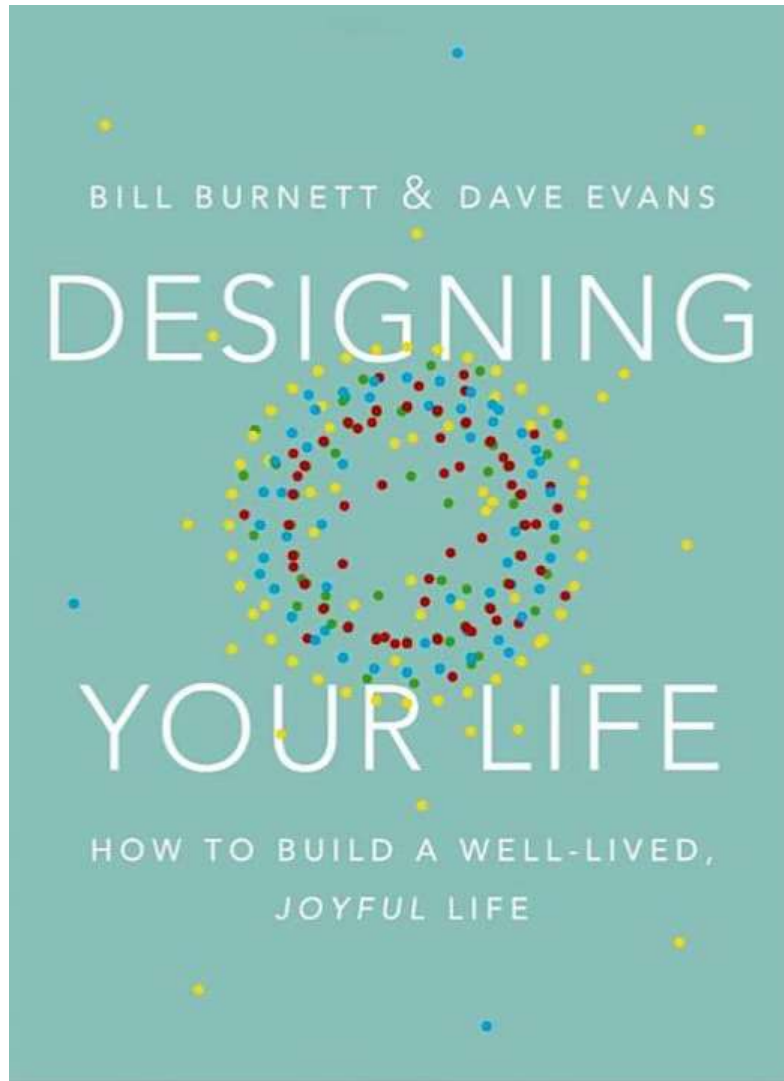
~Kahlil Gibran

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Source: <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1359411-if-we-were-all-to-sit-in-a-circle-and>

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Activity





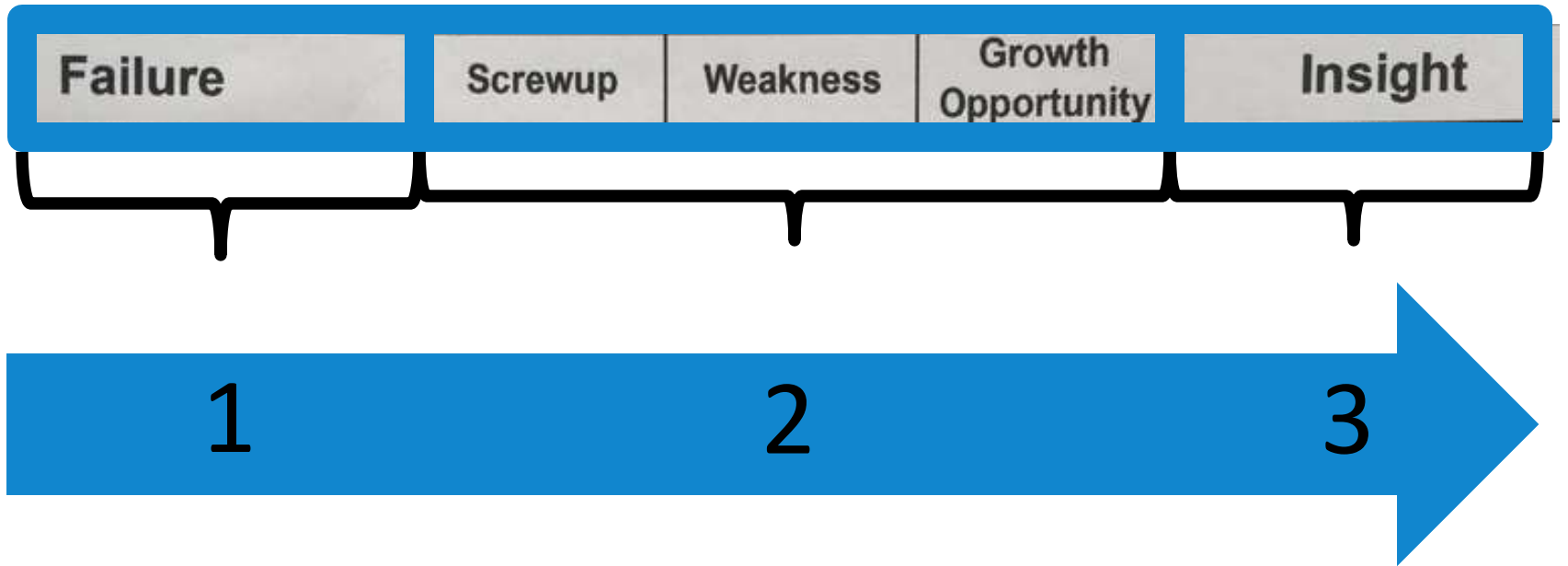
Designingyour.life/resources/

See their handout for helping us to think about failure...

...and to iterate our stormy drafts.

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Image: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/6tzTP5KUJAA/maxresdefault.jpg>



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Adapted From: [Designingyour.life/resources/](https://designingyour.life/resources/)

**Failure:** Did NOT email final draft of research findings with a collaborator before sharing with others.

**Screw-up:** ✓

**Insight:** All drafts are not equal!

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Adapted From: [Designingyour.life/resources/](https://designingyour.life/resources/)

**Failure:** Constantly checking emails during work meetings.

**Weakness:** ✓

**Insight:** Keep phone in pocket and on silent for more meetings.

**Failure:** Three groups of learners were not practicing service design techniques.

**Learning Opportunity:** ✓

**Insight:** No support structure.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Activity

Is your stormy First Draft failure a screw-up, weakness or a learning opportunity?

Any insights?

Spend 3 min.

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Adapted From: [Designingyour.life/resources/](https://designingyour.life/resources/)

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Activity

# Premortem



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Image: Freaktography, Flickr



Cass R. Sunstein

*Coauthor of the bestseller Nudge*

Reid Hastie



GETTING BEYOND  
GROUPTHINK TO  
MAKE GROUPS  
SMARTER

Thinking,  
fast  
and slow



DANIEL  
KAHNEMAN

NOBEL LAUREATE IN ECONOMICS

'Certainly the most important  
psychologist alive today'  
STEVEN PINKER

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Images: <https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/81Si8pYQCIL.jpg> &  
<http://aestheticblasphemy.com/static/media/images/archive/thinking-fast-and-slow.jpg>

(3) What to do now to ↓ failure and ↑ success?

## (1) Epic Failure

- Imagine one of your projects is done.
- Write as many reasons as possible why everyone “touching” this project collectively caused it to fail.
- Use past tense of verbs.

## (2) Amazing Success

- Again imagine the same project is done.
- Describe how the same project team made it an amazing success.
- Use past tense of verbs.

# Review

## Frameworks/Activities

1st: Stormy First Draft & The story I'm telling myself is...

2<sup>nd</sup>: Failure Framework

3<sup>rd</sup> : Premortem

# Continue the Conversation

- Most important?
- Surprise you?
- Unanswered question?

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Thank You!

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