



## THE GUTS TO FAIL

Someone quipped that a classified newspaper ad read: "For sale. Parachute. Only used once, never opened, small stain."

I realize that we cannot afford to fail in some endeavors. But I also know that we cannot afford NOT to fail in most of what we do. Unfortunately, too many of us live by the motto: If at first you don't succeed, don't admit that you tried. Why? We often feel ashamed or embarrassed when we fall flat.

In his book *THE COURAGE TO FAIL* (McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1993), Art Mortell tells about a conversation he had with baseball's Lou Brock. It took place when Brock held the record for stolen bases. He was about 35 years old at the time and his days as a professional player were winding down. Brock was talking about why he successfully stole more bases than younger, faster players.

"When you start out in baseball," Brock said, "you're young and you have the speed and reflexes. However, when you try to steal second base and you get thrown out, it's a long walk back to the dugout, with 40,000 fans watching you. When you reach my age, you come to understand that records are not set by being the quickest, but by the willingness to look bad in the eyes of others."

There are other ways to avoid failure throughout life:

- Never ask anyone out. There will be no possibility of rejection and embarrassment
- Never ask for a promotion. That way you will not risk the humiliation of being turned down.
- Never go back to school. You cannot fail a class you do not take.
- Never change careers. You'll never fail at something you never try.
- Never try anything you've never done before.

If success is just avoiding failure, I don't want it. But if success is about pursuing a passion or finding the guts to risk in order to experience life fully, then I want it. Even if it means a lot of long walks back to the dugout while everyone is watching.

-- Steve Goodier