

Failure

While the wolf pack may be nature's most effective hunting machine, it has a failure rate of approximately 90 percent. In other words, statistically, only one time out of 10 does the wolf have a successful hunt, which is so necessary to the survival of the pack. As a result, wolves are often hungry.

Their response is not lethargy, surrender or defeat. They don't brood or go into depressive funks as people often do. Wolves simply rededicate themselves to the task at hand. They continue to apply their time-tested skills, utilizing the knowledge they have recently acquired from temporary setbacks, confident that success will eventually come. They never stop doing the little things, attending to every detail as they canvass endless miles each year in search of prey.

The human concept of failure has no relevance to the wolf. An unsuccessful hunt simply hones the skills and replenishes the desire. The mistakes made are not viewed as failures but instead become part of the wolf's collective knowledge base. It is like entering data into a computer—the knowledge will be there for future use. What humans choose to consider failure, the wolf converts into wisdom.

Wolves seem to prioritize the unsuccessful events in their lives. Nine hunts that yield no results do not deter them, for they know that with the tenth or eleventh or even twelfth, victory will be theirs. These unsuccessful hunts are not failures, such as when a wolf gets careless and allows a moose hoof to hit him in the head and send him to the happy hunting ground. Now that is failure!

Many people view a single "unsuccessful hunt" as a symbol of their failure in life. From the wolf we learn that it is simply time to go hunting again. Failure is an attitude, not a reality. Failure is a perception; success, an illusion. As we humans increasingly turn to lotteries and casinos hoping for the "big hit," we no longer honor the importance of long-range strategy. Instead, we spend our children's lunch money for a path through quicksand. This is a predictable road to real failure.