

## Leaders Make Mistakes Main Text

Hello, this is AJ, welcome to the next lesson. This one is called “Leaders Make Mistakes” and it comes from a book called *Leadership* by Tom Peters.

Tom Peters is one of my favorite business writers. The reason I like Tom Peters is that he’s very passionate. He’s not a boring businessperson. Most business books are boring, but not Tom Peters. His books are excellent and they’re full of passionate, emotional language and words and emotional passionate ideas about how to make business into something more, something special, not just greedy little people trying to get more money, but really trying to contribute and help people and do great things.

So that’s what Tom Peters writes about and it’s why I really like him. He’s got a great Website TomPeters.com and he’s got a lot of great books. And this book that I’m talking about today is called *Leadership*. And there’s a little section and the section is called “Leaders Make Mistakes”, so I’m going to read this small section and then I’ll talk about it more. So here we go.

“Leaders make mistakes and they make no bones about it. On the wall of my writing studio in Vermont hangs a quotation by David Kelly, “*Fail faster, succeed sooner.*” Next to that quote hangs another by Diane Arbus who told her students “*Learn not to be careful.*”

In placid times leaders may think they have all the answers. In turbulent times leaders must have the best questions, questions that encourage others to undertake voyages of mutual discovery and the essence of that process is letting people screw up. If you try new stuff you screw up. If you try a lot of new stuff you screw up a lot. In fact, the best leaders make big mistakes.

Mistakes are not enough, big mistakes are mandatory.

My all-time favorite PowerPoint slide is this ‘Reward excellent failures, punish mediocre successes.’ These tumultuous times beg for bold initiatives. While thoughtless recklessness is not to be applauded, the word reckless must be examined carefully.

Most people who change the world -- Martin Luther King, Galileo, and Picasso -- they were indeed reckless, but not thoughtless. The Martin Luther Kings of the world, the Galileo’s, the Picasso’s, the Churchill’s, the de Gaulle’s, they attempted to create an

entirely new world against long odds. If that isn't reckless I don't know what the word means."

Okay, that's the end of this section, passionate language from Tom Peters, as always. What's he saying? Well, quite simply, he's saying that you have to try new things. You have to take risks in your life, in business. And when you take risks you will make mistakes, you will fail. Failure is mandatory. Mandatory means required, it means you must do it. You must make big mistakes because without big mistakes you will never have big successes. He's saying that the essence of succeeding is failing.

The people who succeed the most, the people who become the richest or the companies that do the best, it doesn't matter what area of life, they're usually the people who have the biggest mistakes because they're always trying new stuff. They're always trying to do something much, much better, much bigger, and much more interesting and many times, they fail.

Many times they make mistakes, but they don't stop. They don't cry "I made a mistake, I failed", they learn from it. They look at the mistake, they learn and then they try something else even better and they keep doing that process again and again. They try something great, they fail, they learn, they think about it and then they try something else great, it never ends.

Tom Peters says, "That is the process for huge success. That is the process that all leaders must follow. Leaders must make mistakes and leaders must encourage their people, their team, to make mistakes also." I love this because it's absolutely true. It's what I follow in my own business. I've made so many mistakes when I started Effortless English, when I started the company. We started as a small membership site, but then that didn't work. It was a failure, it was a big failure, so we quit and then we tried something else.

We started recording the lessons and selling the lessons as a bundle, as a group. And then that worked, but our first Website was really ugly. So then, eventually, we improved the Website and then our lessons. When I first made my original lessons the sound quality was not too good. I didn't have any money, so I had to record them in my apartment. But now we're in a recording studio and these have a much better, higher-quality sound.

It's a never-ending process. As long as you try something new, as long as you try to be different you're always going to make a mistake. Unfortunately, in school people are taught to be afraid of mistakes. What happens in school if you make a mistake? You get a big red (x). You fail your test. You fail on your paper. You get a bad grade. You get criticized by the teacher. You get in trouble with your parents. All of school is focused on teaching you to avoid mistakes.

As you grew up going to school year after year you were taught again and again, don't make mistakes. Don't make mistakes. Don't make mistakes. Don't try something new. Don't be different. School taught you to fail in life. They taught you not to fail on tests, they taught you not to fail at small things, but that belief will cause you to fail in your life. It means you'll never improve very much, you'll never be special. You'll never do anything great if you're afraid to make mistakes.

If you want to have a great life you absolutely must make mistakes. If you make big mistakes you'll have a great, big, fantastic life. It doesn't matter if you like it that is the truth. So you need to learn how to screw up and you need to learn how to accept it and learn from it and do it again and again and again. That's Tom Peters' message, it's also my message. So, please, don't be afraid of mistakes, mistakes are fantastic.

That's why on our forums and in our Master Member Site I always tell people "Write on the forums and communicate. Never worry about mistakes." I want to see mistakes on those forums. I like the students who write on our forums and they have mistakes. I like it! Why? Because most members never write anything because they're afraid. Most members do nothing. They never contribute, they never write anything. Because why? They're afraid they'll make a mistake, so they don't learn. They learn slowly because of fear.

The people who are writing and making mistakes, they're the ones who learn faster. They're the best members, they're our Master Members. They're not afraid. They keep making mistakes again and again. They make a lot of mistakes when they write on the forums. Everyone can see their mistakes, they don't care.

That's why they learn faster, that's why they improve more quickly. That's why they are our best members. They're the ones that I really, really love, the ones who are not afraid to make mistakes. The ones who make those mistakes every day and they just keep communicating, they keep on going, they never stop, they're the best students.

And I try to follow this same philosophy myself, in my business and as a teacher. As a teacher I always try new things. When I was teaching in the classroom I was always trying new activities, new approaches, new methods, constantly trying them. Most of them failed. Most of the time the students didn't like it or it was not effective. Did I stop? Did I cry? "Oh no, I made a mistake." No, I did not. I learned and then I tried something else and I tried something else.

So, this Effortless English System we have now is the result of many mistakes in the past. And I hope and I plan that in the future the Effortless English System will be even better because I will continue to try new stuff. We're playing with video now. We have a Master Member Site which uses video. That's something new. Some of the videos are going to be bad. I'm going to make mistakes. I will always continue to make mistakes because I know that making mistakes is the key to growth. It's the key to improvement, it's the key to innovation, and it's the key to big success.

You need to learn that, too. So this is my message to you, do not be afraid. Get on the forums now, today and write something, anything. Write about your life, write about what you like to do, write about music, write about movies, I don't care, write about anything. Make mistakes. Make grammar mistakes, make spelling mistakes. That's the way you will improve and that's the way you will get stronger as an English speaker.

If you do nothing, if you refuse to write, if you're afraid to make mistakes, you're going to learn slowly, so that's my challenge to you. Every day, at least every week, get on the forums and write something and make mistakes. Do not correct your mistakes. Don't worry about it. Don't look at a grammar book. You just write something, five minutes, 10 minutes and, boom, you hit enter. You publish it with the mistakes. Let everyone see the mistakes. That is my challenge to you. That is what you must do if you are serious.

If you really want to improve as an English learner, if you really want to speak better and write better and understand better that's what you must do. You must write on the forums every week, every day, with mistakes. I hope you'll do that. If you do that, if you do it a lot, then you can become one of our Master Members. And Master Members, I email them personally sometimes because they're my favorite members. They're the ones I really love, so I like to give my attention to them.

If you do nothing, if you sit and you stay quiet and you're afraid to make a mistake, well, you're just not going to learn very fast. So make your decision. I hope you'll decide to be strong, to be brave and to make mistakes so you will improve very quickly. I will see you next time.