

daily GOOD

Jul 27, 2007

If I ran a school, I'd give the average grade to the ones who gave me all the right answers, for being good parrots. I'd give the top grades to those who made a lot of mistakes and told me about them, and then told me what they learned from them. — Buckminister Fuller

What Foundations Learn From Failure

Among the reports on a coffee table in the Carnegie Corporation's reception area is one on the foundation's efforts to help Zimbabwe overhaul its Constitution and government. It gets straight to the point: "This is the anatomy of a grant that failed." Just a few years ago, it would have been astonishing for a foundation, particularly one as traditional as Carnegie, to publicize a failure. Today, though, many of the nation's largest foundations regard disclosing and analyzing their failures as bordering on a moral obligation. "Sure, it's better to tell your success stories, but there's no harm in sharing our failures, too. The only thing at stake is our egos," says one foundation CEO. This New York Times article explores the value of being transparent about failure.

Be The Change:

What wisdom have you gained from mistakes you've made in your own life?