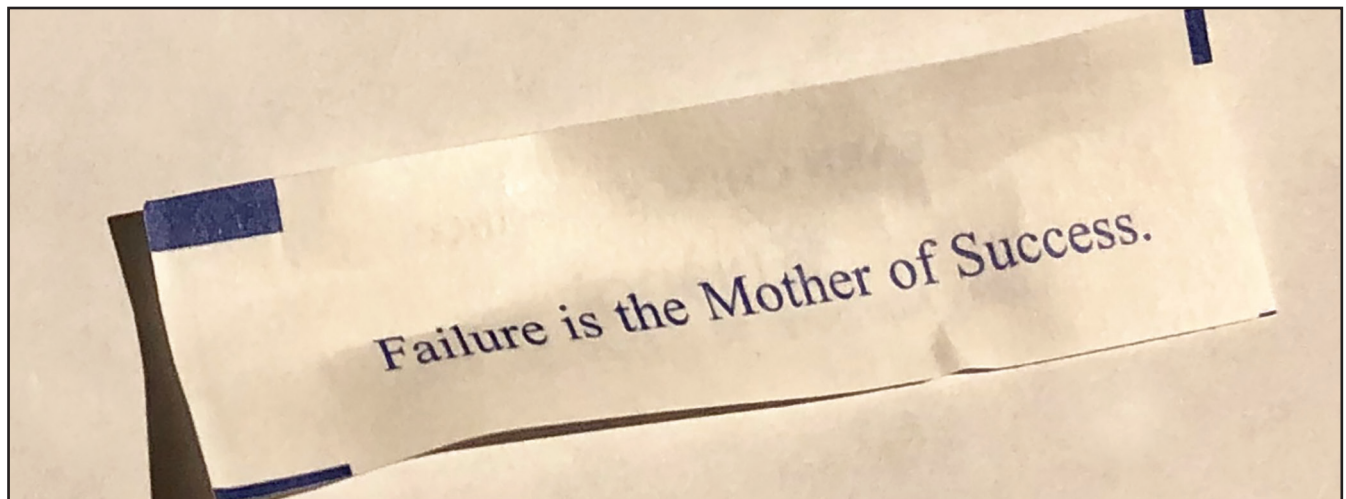


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4. Make Sure Your Work is New. The first thing I start when thinking of a research idea is the “References” section. I collect the prior work on the topic to assess the novelty of the idea and the previous methods used to explore it. This saves work in the end and allows you to shape the project to truly fill the unmet need.

5. Aim High (and Expect to Miss). I often joke about how many times I have “donated” \$60 to the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. Desk rejects sting. My first 5 grant applications failed. I started my dedicated research time with the lofty goal of 10 accepted first-author publications in 12 months; I fully expected to fail but told all my research mentors my plans in order to set the bar high. It was amazing how much support I got for my ridiculous goal. Five original research articles, 2 case reports, 1 review article, a commentary, and a book chapter later I realized I never would have been this productive if I hadn’t had this insane expectation. Of note: Missing the mark (“What only 7 manuscripts?”) would also have clearly been acceptable.

I started residency knowing I wanted to do clinical research. For the past 5 years, I’ve worked hard to carve a niche for myself studying financial toxicity and how out-of-pocket costs can have real world effects on quality of life and quality of care.⁴ I set high goals and failed more times than I can count. And I’ve often wondered if we wouldn’t all do better—have less burnout, be happier residents, have more genuine success—if we *embraced* failure.

Failure *is* an option. Just fail forward.

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