



## Cold Fail

Often I tell people that when the temperature gets below 60, I am ready to head south. I'm not particularly fond of the cold, so this week's chill made events a bit more visceral.

I suffered a failure this week, a loss really. I guess **we** suffered a loss. Like a gust of Arctic wind, it chills me to my core. I failed this week at something that was very important to me. I failed as a teacher. It was a professional failure and, as any teacher knows, personal as well. I don't deal well with failure.

Just recently, my son and I discussed mistakes and how people will say that they are "okay" if you learn from them. That's true. Failure is something a magnitude different. Failure has consequences that, while you can grow from it, stay with you.

To this day I wonder about students who did not pass my classes, and potentially, who probably did not graduate. It's arrogant of me to think that by one action or another I pushed a person on an unsatisfactory trajectory.

We know as teachers that we can change the world, which makes it particularly hard when the change we believe we work for is not a good result. A failure.

I do not like the feeling of failing. I do not like my students failing.

It is easy saying *this thing* or *that thing* has already set the deviling action in motion. This line of thought has never brought comfort to my heart and even less comfort to the person who is lost.

It's **not** my intention to be negative by penning this note. Rather, it is a realization that the work that we do has an impact on people and on our society. It is important. It is necessary.

For now, the failure will be a tender wound. It will remind me of the battle lost. It will keep me humble. It will heal to a scar but hopefully not harden me to the world.

Much like the scars that I carry on my physical body that announce to me the change in weather well ahead of forecasters... maybe... just maybe this failure... this scar will awaken me to the challenges we face in time to make a positive change in course.

Here's to healing and a good weekend!

Happy Maths,  
Peter