

The
Only
2 ways
we ever
Fail

— CRACK THESE TWO, —
CHANGE EVERYTHING



LOVE



CAREER



PARENTING



FAITH



LONELINESS



GRIEF



HEALTH



WINNING

An Inspiring Story of Overcoming
Failures in **Love, Career, Parenting,**
Faith, Loneliness, Grief, Health
and **Winning.**

— ◆ —
PANKAJ GULATI

*The Only 2 Ways
We Ever Fail*

*Crack these Two, Change
Everything*

The Only 2 Ways We Ever Fail

*An Inspiring Story of
Overcoming Failures in Love,
Career, Parenting, Faith,
Loneliness, Grief, Health and
Winning*

Pankaj Gulati: THE FAILURE GUY™

*An IIM Alumni, helping organisations and individuals
build resilience.*

www.pankajgulati.com

Crack These Two, Change Everything

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THE FAILURE GUY™

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The Only 2 Ways We Ever Fail

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To the rejections, the misunderstandings, the silences, the losses, the doubts— **THANK YOU.**

You did not weaken me. You forced me to listen. You stripped away illusions and brought me closer to truth. This book exists because those failures refused to stay meaningless.

To my daughters, Sanvi and Mahira.

May you grow up not chasing a life without failure but mastering the art of **understanding it.**

May you always speak to yourselves with kindness, and to others with courage.

May you never feel broken by what does not go your way but instead learn to see it as a message waiting to be understood.

And above all, I wish you a life of **calm—deep, steady calm— and the power to rise above every failure you encounter.**

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Chapter one

*Two People, Two
Truths*

Crack These Two, Change Everything

The Night Meera Sang Like She Had Nothing Left to Lose

The bar was full, but the room was empty. Empty of listening. Glasses clinked, laughter rose and fell, conversations overlapped - comfortably unaware of the girl standing under the warm yellow light, holding a microphone like it was the last thing anchoring her to the ground.

Meera closed her eyes and sang anyway. Not for applause. Not for recognition. She sang because silence inside her was louder than the noise outside.

Yaksh stood near the far end of the bar, jacket folded over his arm, phone glowing in his hand. He had come straight from office—deployment done, release successful, happiness scheduled. This was a celebration he hadn't planned but had agreed to.

He did not plan to look up either. But her voice didn't ask for permission. It wasn't perfect. It cracked once. It hesitated in places.

But it felt **undecorated**. Yaksh felt something unfamiliar—like a system glitch that couldn't be debugged. He looked up. And for a moment, time stopped running the way it usually did for him—efficiently, forward, unquestioning.

That was the first connection. Not attraction. But attention.

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Two People, Two Truths

They spoke after the set ended. Nothing dramatic. Nothing cinematic. Just two strangers leaning slightly toward curiosity.

Meera talked about music the way people talk when they don't need approval. Yaksh listened the way people listen when they're realizing their life has been too loud.

Over the weeks, they became regulars in each other's spaces. Yaksh admired Meera's courage—to live without certainty. Meera admired Yaksh's discipline—to move without chaos.

In the beginning, difference felt like balance. Yaksh helped Meera structure her gigs. Meera pulled Yaksh into evenings with no plans.

They laughed easily. They slept peacefully. They felt seen. This was love in its early honesty—before fear entered.

Where Fear Slipped in Quietly

The problem did not arrive as disagreement. It arrived as **concern**. Yaksh started asking questions—not accusatory, but cautious.

“Have you thought about where this is going?”

“How long can this phase sustain you?”

“Don't you want more stability?”

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He meant care. He spoke fear. Meera heard something else. - *Evaluation.*

She smiled. She joked. She said, “*I’m figuring it out.*”
But inside her, something shifted.

Why does he need my life to look different?
Why does my path suddenly feel inadequate?

She did not ask him. She asked herself and answered herself harshly.

The Things They Didn’t Say

Silence became common. Not hostile silence. Polite silence. Cautious silence.

Yaksh stopped sharing his uncertainties. Meera stopped sharing her excitement. They were trying to protect each other. They were slowly erasing themselves.

Life does not break when people shout. It breaks when they **stop speaking truth.**

The Fight That Wasn’t Really a Fight

One evening, Meera received a call—an opportunity to perform at a small festival outside the city. She was glowing. Yaksh calculated instantly. Travel. Lost income. Uncertainty.

“*You know this doesn’t really move you forward, right?*” he said gently.

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Something inside her snapped—not loudly, not violently. Softly. “*Forward according to who?*” she asked.

Silence.

That silence carried months of unsaid things. That night, neither slept. Because **curiosity** had woken up fully. And curiosity does not let people sleep when truth is overdue.

Frustration Drives You to Cheers

The music hadn’t changed. The bar hadn’t changed. But something inside Yaksh had. He stood at the same spot he once had, months ago—at the far end of the bar, where the light didn’t reach fully and conversations didn’t stick.

Only this time, he wasn’t looking up. He was trying not to. But Meera’s voice didn’t give him that option. It travelled—not as sound, but as memory. Each note carried something unfinished. Something unspoken. Something that hadn’t found its way into words when it mattered. Yaksh tightened his grip on the glass in his hand. *Why am I here again?*

He had asked himself that question outside the bar for ten full minutes before stepping in. *Closure? Regret? Habit? Or maybe... curiosity.*

That annoying, persistent curiosity that had never left him since the night things ended.

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On stage, Meera's eyes were closed. She sang like she used to. No, not exactly. There was a difference now. Earlier, she sang like someone discovering herself. Now..... she sang like someone who had already lost something and had nothing left to protect. And that difference pierced him.

He turned away.

"Whiskey?" the bartender asked. Yaksh nodded. *"Neat."*

The glass arrived. He took it without looking, took a sip too quickly—and felt the burn settle into his chest. That's when he noticed someone beside him.

"Are you celebrating or mourning?" the man said lightly, raising his own glass.

Yaksh glanced at him. Mid-40s, calm face, eyes that didn't wander, posture relaxed but aware. Yaksh gave a faint smile.

"Both," he replied.

The man lifted his glass slightly. *"Fair answer."*

Yaksh hesitated for a second... then raised his own glass. *"Cheers."*

"Cheers," the man echoed. They drank in silence. One sip. Two sips. By the third, the silence didn't feel awkward anymore. It felt... observant.

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The man looked at Yaksh, not deliberately, but attentively. *“You don’t look like someone enjoying the drink,”* he said finally.

Yaksh let out a small breath. *“I’m not.”*

“Then why drink?”

Yaksh smirked faintly. *“Distraction.”*

The man nodded, as if that answer fit perfectly somewhere in his mental map. *“Temporary distraction or long-term habit?”* he asked.

Yaksh looked at him sideways. *“You ask a lot of questions.”*

The man smiled. *“That’s my job.”*

“Therapist?” Yaksh asked.

The man shook his head. *“Observer.”*

That answer confused Yaksh. Before he could react, the man took out a card and slid it across the counter. Yaksh glanced at it casually. Then again - properly. The card read:

Pankaj Gulati
THE FAILURE GUY™

Yaksh blinked. *“The Failure Guy?”* he repeated.

Pankaj nodded. *“Full-time.”*

Yaksh laughed softly. *“That’s... an interesting title.”*

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“It’s accurate,” Pankaj said calmly. “I help people understand failure.”

Yaksh leaned back slightly. *“Then you picked the right bar,”* he said, looking toward the stage again.

Pankaj followed his gaze briefly—but didn’t comment. *“Walk?”* he asked. Yaksh hesitated. Then nodded. They moved to a quieter corner.

The crowd noise faded into a background hum. Conversations became indistinct. Even the music softened as if the space itself had decided that what was about to be said needed room.

Yaksh sat down. For a moment, he said nothing.

Then— *“Her name is Meera.”*

Pankaj didn’t interrupt.

“We were together,” Yaksh continued. *“And it wasn’t dramatic. No big fights. No major issues.”*

He paused, searching for words. *“That’s what makes it worse.”*

Pankaj tilted his head slightly. *“How?”*

“Because I don’t know what exactly went wrong,”
Yaksh admitted.

He ran a hand through his hair. *“I mean, I think I do... but every time I try to explain it, it feels... incomplete.”*

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“Try,” Pankaj said simply.

Yaksh nodded slowly. *“I wanted stability. She wanted freedom. I was thinking long-term. She was living in the present. I tried to help her plan... she thought I was limiting her.”*

He exhaled. *“And instead of talking honestly... we both just started adjusting.”*

His voice softened. *“I thought I was protecting the relationship.”*

“And were you?” Pankaj asked gently.

Yaksh smiled without humour. “No.”

Silence.

Pankaj took a sip, then said—*“Most people begin their journey with failure by asking one painful question—”*

Yaksh looked at him.

“What went wrong.”

Yaksh nodded immediately. *“Exactly.”*

Pankaj continued, his tone calm but precise— *“They replay events like a broken film—an exam not cleared, a job not received, a relationship that ended... a business that collapsed, a dream that quietly died without giving a warning.”*

Yaksh listened, still but alert.

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“They look outward for reasons, They look inward for blame... secretly.”

Something tightened inside Yaksh.

Pankaj continued, *“And many spend their entire lives carrying the weight of that one moment... labelling themselves with words like not good enough, unlucky, incapable... or weak.”*

Yaksh looked away. That last word stayed. *Weak.*

Pankaj watched him—not intrusively, but knowingly. *“But what if we have misunderstood failure itself?”* he asked.

Yaksh frowned slightly.

“What if failure is not as many and complex as it appears?” Pankaj continued.

Yaksh shook his head faintly. *“Doesn’t feel that way.”*

Pankaj smiled. *“It never does... when you’re inside it.”*

He leaned forward. *“But what if all failures—no matter how large or small—come from just two places?”*

Yaksh raised an eyebrow. *“Two?”*

“Only two.”

“That sounds too simple,” Yaksh said.

“Simple doesn’t mean easy,” Pankaj replied.

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He held up two fingers. *“A human being can fail in only two ways.”*

Yaksh leaned in.

“First... in how they communicate with others.”

“Second... in how they communicate with themselves.”

Silence.

Yaksh blinked. *“That’s it?”* he asked.

“That’s it.”

Yaksh leaned back, processing.

“That doesn’t cover everything,” he said slowly.

Pankaj nodded. *“You’re right.”*

“It doesn’t cover everything you see.”

He tapped the table lightly. *“It covers everything that causes what you see.”*

Yaksh’s expression shifted slightly. *“Explain,”* he said.

Pankaj smiled faintly. *“Failure today feels heavy not because it is frequent...”*

He paused.

“But because it is misunderstood.”

Yaksh’s eyes didn’t leave his now.

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“You’ve been taught to associate failure with outcomes,” Pankaj continued.

“Breakups. Rejections. losses. Embarrassment”

He shook his head. *“But outcomes are only results. Not causes.”*

He leaned in. *“If a tree bears bitter fruit... do you blame the fruit?”*

“No,” Yaksh said automatically.

“Exactly, you inspect the roots,” Pankaj said. *“The soil. The water. The system beneath it.”*

Yaksh’s breathing slowed.

“In the same way,” Pankaj continued, *“your breakup was not the failure.”*

Yaksh looked at him sharply. Then... what was?

Pankaj answered— *“What happened before the breakup.”*

Silence occupied the space fully now. Yaksh stared at the table. His mind moved back. Her smile that felt forced. His “practical” questions. Her silence. His assumptions.

“...I never told her I was scared,” Yaksh said quietly.

Pankaj nodded. *“And did she tell you what she truly felt?”*

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Yaksh shook his head slowly. “No.”

“*There it is,*” Pankaj said softly. “*Failure Type One. How you communicate with others.*”

Yaksh exhaled slowly. “*That... hurts,*” he admitted.

Pankaj nodded. “It should.”

He paused.

“*But there’s a deeper one.*”

Yaksh looked up.

“*The second failure.*”

Pankaj tapped his temple. “*This one happens here.*”

Yaksh frowned. “*Inside?*”

“Yes.”

Pankaj’s voice softened. “*Most people are not defeated by others. They are defeated by the voice they live with every day.*”

Yaksh swallowed.

“*What have you been telling yourself since things changed?*” Pankaj asked.

Yaksh hesitated.

Then— “*...that I wasn’t enough.*” The words felt heavier out loud.

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“And?” Pankaj asked.

“That I should have handled things better.”

“And?”

“That maybe... I try to control things too much.”

He paused.

“And sometimes... I wonder if I made a mistake choosing her.”

Pankaj nodded, slowly. *“And how does that voice make you behave?”*

Yaksh didn't need to think.

“I overthink everything.”

“I replay conversations.”

“I doubt my instincts.”

His voice dropped slightly. *“And I don't trust myself anymore.”*

Silence.

Pankaj looked at him steadily.

“That,” he said, “is Failure Type Two. A breakdown in communication with yourself.”

Something clicked. Not loudly. But clearly.

Yaksh leaned back.

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“So you’re saying this whole thing...” he gestured weakly toward the stage, “...is because I failed in these two ways?”

Pankaj shook his head. “No.”

“I’m saying your confusion is because you’re only looking at the ending.”

He leaned forward. *“Your relationship did not fail because you were different.”*

Yaksh’s eyes narrowed slightly. *“Then why?”*

Pankaj answered simply— *“Because you stopped communicating honestly. Both with her... and with yourself.”*

Yaksh looked toward Meera again. This time..... differently. Not as someone he had lost. But as someone he had not fully understood.

“And now?” Yaksh asked quietly.

Pankaj smiled. *“Now you have clarity... not closure.”*

Yaksh frowned. *“Difference?”*

“Closure ends questions,” Pankaj said. *“Clarity begins better ones.”*

Yaksh leaned forward. “Like?”

Pankaj held his gaze.

“Where did I stop being honest with her?”

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“And where did I stop being honest with myself?”

Yaksh absorbed that silently.

The music continued. People laughed. Glasses clinked. The world remained unchanged. But inside Yaksh— Something rearranged itself.

Not healed. Not solved. But... organized.

The chaos that once felt overwhelming now had a pattern. And patterns... could be understood.

Pankaj raised his glass again. *“Cheers,”* he said.

Yaksh looked at him... then at his own glass. This time, when he lifted it— There was no forced smile. Just a calm, quiet acceptance.

“Cheers,” he said. And for the first time that night— The drink didn't feel like an escape. It felt like a pause before understanding.

FAILURE ISN'T THE END. IT'S A MESSAGE.

Yaksh believed he lost Meera because life had other plans.

Meera believed Yaksh never truly understood her.

Both were certain about the reasons -
until they met the **The Failure Guy™**.

This story will make you revisit your own stories of failures,
just like theirs. It will show you exactly where things begin to break in
Love, Careers, Parenting, Faith, Loneliness, Grief, Health and Winning -
and how to stop self destruction.

The **only 2 ways we ever Fail** reveals the two hidden
patterns behind all our failures and more importantly -
it helps you understand it so deeply that it loses
it's power over you.

CRACK THESE TWO,
*and you won't just overcome failure -
you will change everything.*



LOVE



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About the Author

PANKAJ GULATI, popularly known as The Failure Guy™,
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“ Success is built on
what you learn after you fall. ”