



# 10 Victories in #Fail's Clothing

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Mike Morucci

@GCGeek

mikemorucci.com

moruccimike@gmail.com

# Introduction



- Mike Morucci
- In my head, perpetually 12 years old
- Started using WordPress in 2014
- Title: I just build web sites
- Part-time freelancer
- And I fail. All the time.
- P.S. None of my links in here are affiliate links.  
Don't be that guy.

# Failure is Awesome!



...and adorable.

#1 Proud Member of  
Procrastination Nation

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# Presentation

Written ~~the week the day~~ 10  
minutes before go time!

## Anxiety Matrix

- Why do I put everything off?
  - I should really be working on this... *Deep Space 9* marathon?
  - Yikes! I'll never finish!
  - They'll THINK I'm a poseur.
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# I procrastinate, because I ~~love~~ hesitate.

- I signed up to present on the last day. Because I hesitate.
- Self doubt is self-created, but it can also be defeated by yourself.
- I'm a writer so I love deadlines - I actually need deadlines.
- I procrastinated starting on a friend's DJ web site for six months. My first paying client. Am I good enough? Am I ready?
- Eventually, I just committed. I'll do it! And I dove in.

# The Victory

Deadlines motivate me. I could have rationalized 19 reasons to cancel, but I didn't. And I finished. This presentation and my first client web site. On time.

And I met you. Aw.



#2 Build a Logo for FREE!

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# VegRules

“No.”

Clearly, I'm not a graphic designer.

## Anxiety Matrix

- Who would use this?
  - The brand will fail!
  - It's for my wife's business!
  - She'll KNOW I'm a poseur...
-

# The Victory

I realized *free* is rarely *better*. With a small investment, and competition among skilled designers, we got this instead...



# VegRules

Simple tips for a whole-food, plant-based life

[VegRules](#)

#3 SITE DOWN! SITE DOWN!

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# World Stops

What did YOU do, Mike?!

## Anxiety Matrix

- Client is freaking...
  - I am freaking...
  - He'll KNOW I'm a poseur...
-

# Why Is My Site Down?

## I'll check the host...

Nope. You're all good. (So glad I switched to these guys.) They tell me it's probably your DNS. One of three things...

1. Your DNS is down.
2. Your DNS is no longer pointing to the right IP address.
3. They purposely stopped your DNS because you didn't pay your bill.

## So, what about your DNS...

- What's a DNS?
- Domain Name Service. You pay them \$15/year for your URL.
- What's a URL?
- Uniform Resource...
- Crickets.
- Web address.
- Oh, that. I got it with Yahoo Site Builder. In 2005.
- They're gone. It's now Aabaco. But you log in at luminate.com.
- Oops. I didn't pay the bill.
- Pay the bill.



# The Victory

Customer realized his monthly DNS bills were in his spam folder and he hadn't paid. I helped him back online same day. Zero to hero.

Breathe. Google. Repeat. And use a responsive host.

#4 Pick a Theme. Any Theme.

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# How hard can this be?

10,000+ WordPress Themes to  
choose from. On one vendor  
site.

## Anxiety Matrix

- Regular license...?
  - Extended license...?
  - GNU GPL...?
  - Sooooo many themes!
  - What if I pick the wrong theme?!
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# I picked LOTS of wrong themes.

- But you can't learn without trying. Oooo, you can swap themes on the fly.
- Learn how they operate, what's crucial, what's nice to have.
- You can download the free version and check out additional features that come with the paid version. Lots of sites have demos, too.
- You can always code this *stuff* from scratch and have complete control if you're a rock star. I'm not a rock star.
- You can use a builder, which is the route I chose.

*Just make sure you use a child theme. You keep all your customizations protected in the child theme every time you update the parent.*

# Divi from Elegant Themes

Edit Page [Add New](#)

Home

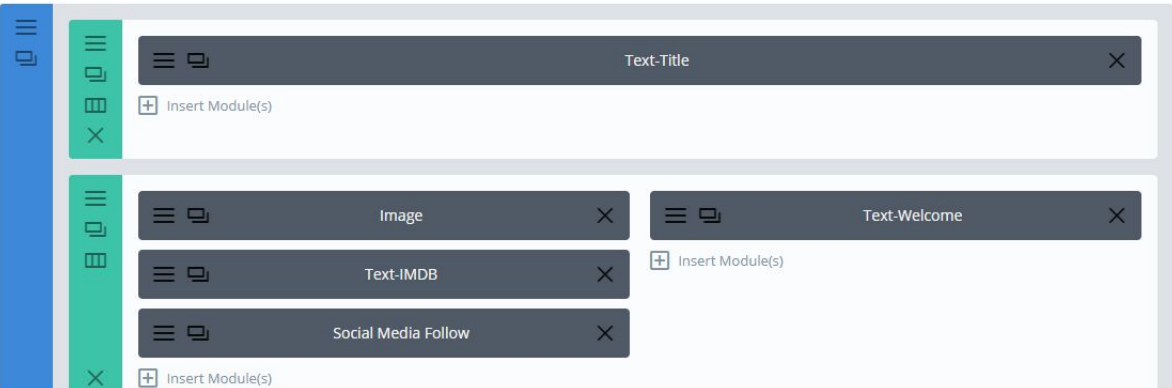
Permalink: <https://mikemorucci.com/> [Get Shortlink](#)

[Use Default Editor](#) [Use Visual Builder](#)

Yoast SEO

**The Divi Builder** ↑↓ ≡ ▼

[Save to Library](#) [Load From Library](#) [Clear Layout](#) ↶ ↷ ⌵



The image displays the Divi Builder interface within a WordPress editor. At the top, there's a header with 'Edit Page' and 'Add New' buttons. Below that is a text input field containing 'Home' and a 'Permalink' section with the URL 'https://mikemorucci.com/' and a 'Get Shortlink' button. Two large buttons are present: 'Use Default Editor' (green) and 'Use Visual Builder' (blue). A 'Yoast SEO' dropdown menu is visible below the buttons. The main content area is a purple bar labeled 'The Divi Builder' with navigation icons. Below this bar are buttons for 'Save to Library', 'Load From Library', and 'Clear Layout', along with undo, redo, and refresh icons. The main workspace shows a vertical sidebar on the left with a blue background and a green background for the active module. The workspace contains several modules: 'Text-Title', 'Image', 'Text-IMDB', 'Social Media Follow', and 'Text-Welcome'. Each module has a plus icon, a name, and a close icon. There are also 'Insert Module(s)' buttons between the modules.

# The Victory

GNU General Public License (GPL) is a widely used free software license, which guarantees end users the freedom to run, study, share and modify the software. And you can copy and redistribute at will, as well as charge for your services.

The [Divi Theme](#) builder is a personal choice, GPL and versatile enough for my needs.

#5 Update All

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# NEVER click “update all”!

I clicked “update all”. And I’d  
click it again.

## Anxiety Matrix

- In one click, all my sites...gone.
  - Must...resist...
  - They wouldn’t offer “update all” if it wasn’t smart.
  - Wait! They offer “reply all”. Except on this one VP’s laptop because...well, you heard about Janice and “the email”.
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# I. Clicked. Update All.

- It worked great 50 times in a row. Until that one time I brought down my site updating all my plugins and themes at once.
- Something went wrong and my site was down.
- WordPress stopped responding. I'll just close my browser...
- I couldn't log back into WordPress.
- It took hours to recover. OK, it took hours to Google; it took minutes to recover.
- I had to clear my cache, de-install a plugin, re-install a plugin, and I was back up.

# Just Be Careful

## Textbook logic...

Follow traditional best practices.

1. Push your site to a lower environment, like a staging site.
2. Make all your changes.
3. Test all your changes.
4. Push your staged site back to production (live).

## My reality...

- I manage a *bunch* of sites.
- I update them all together, on a periodic basis, because I'm busy.
- I'm still going to update them live, but now I use several tools to prevent catastrophe, keep me moving and I can recover in minutes.

# The Victory: Tools!

- [iThemes Sync](#)
  - Uptime Monitoring - get an email if a site is down, and when it's back up.
  - I can update a plugin or theme across all sites, or manage a site at a time.
  - I quickly check the sites/pages after I update.
- [FlyWheel](#) (my host)
  - 30 days of backups
  - One-click restore from the last backup. I've used it several times, like when a theme update broke image animation everywhere. :-D

# #6 Leave the Bandwagon for Yankee Fans

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Am I a Web  
Developer?  
Designer?  
Marketer?  
Marketeer?

Who am I?!

## Anxiety Matrix

- Everyone knows who they are but me.
  - I have to pick one! But which one?
  - Once I pick there's no going back!
  - I am definitely a Poseur!
-

# Even at WordCamp, I have to pick a label.

- How do I identify myself?
- Programmers will know I'm not *really* a developer. And they'll shun me.
- Artists will know I'm not *really* a designer. And they'll tease me.
- Marketers will know I Don't. Have. A. Brand! Seriously?! What's my brand?!
- They're gonna line us up like when I was 12 and pick teams and I'll be last...
- STOP

# The Victory

- Just be you. Don't worry about what everyone else is.
- When someone asks, I just say I build web sites. If I don't know how to do something, I know someone who does. I can corral an awesome team.
- Save the cheerleader, save the world.
- We're a community.

# #7 Analysis Paralysis

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# I need the perfect plugin

I have to make the right choice!

## Anxiety Matrix

- There are 9 plugins that might accommodate my needs.
  - This one is cheap but...
  - This one is expensive but...
  - Choice A has a great option 3 but Choice B has a meh option 3, a great option 7, a poor option 2...
  - What was I looking for?
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# I took over three months to choose a chat plugin

- I literally created a spreadsheet with all the features, costs, licensing fees, reviews
- I read blog reviews and Top 10 lists
- I downloaded demos
- I finally made my choice
- I put it on my site and forgot all about it - site was under construction, not live
- When I went to use the plugin later I hated my choice
- I went back and in a matter of hours found a great chat I could embed into my pages *with* cloud hosting called [FlyZoo](#)



# The Victory

- Do your research but don't overwhelm yourself.
- It doesn't have to be perfect.
- Just pick something - try not to lock into a long-term rate (or the full developer package) until you're sure you like it.
- You can change your mind later.
- I found direct contact with the plugin developer/company got all of my questions answered and tested responsiveness. And a nice \$ deal!

#8 Unlimited Sites for \$4.95/month!

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# #IAmCheap

I'm just starting out and I don't want to spend a lot of money

## Anxiety Matrix

- I don't have any clients yet. Will I ever?!
  - What if all this fails?
  - What the heck is a cPanel and why would I want a cPanel?
  - Did I mention I was cheap?
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## I'll find the right host...

Wow. Remember analysis paralysis? So many features, and promises, and confusing comparison items like site traffic, bandwidth, CDNs, “visits”, storage...

I went with cheap. Unlimited sites for less than \$13/month. Fairly reputable, but shared, and I mean really shared, hosting. And then I needed help. Hello? Hello? Tick tock tick tock.

A gator never forgets.

## In 2017, I migrated everything...

I had several sites to manage, mostly my own.

I wanted pure WordPress hosting, responsive support (hosting and WordPress knowledge), no more cPanel, and better options.

There are many great hosts out there. I personally found it with [FlyWheel](#).

# The Victory

- With my first host, I learned a lot, including cPanel.
- WordPress software is free to install on any host.
- I also learned responsive support, security, easy backups and restores, and deep WordPress knowledge is worth the money I spend.

#9 Math Fail

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# Count much?

There are only 9, Mike

## Anxiety Matrix

- They're gonna expect 10.
  - They're gonna hate me...
  - My dad is a mathematician. HE'LL know I'm a poseur!
  - I over promised and under delivered.
  - I hate corporate clichés. And motivational posters.
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**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
DON'T  
REPLY ALL**

# The Victory

We're done! You can leave early!

Without trying, we don't move forward. Without failing, we don't learn. Failure is awesome!

Thanks for listening!



Mike Morucci

# WORDCAMP BALTIMORE '17

Presentation: [Slides](#)

Email: [moruccimike@gmail.com](mailto:moruccimike@gmail.com)

Twitter: [@GCGeek](https://twitter.com/GCGeek)

Website: [mikemorucci.com](http://mikemorucci.com)