

The Gift of Failure

Almost everyone knows that Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. But most don't know that Walt Disney was once fired from a newspaper for a lack of ideas and his first cartoon production company went bankrupt. Everyone loves Lucy but Lucille Ball was told that she had no talent and should leave Murray Anderson's drama school. With all of Dustin Hoffman's success it's hard to believe he worked as a janitor and an attendant in a mental ward because he failed in his first attempt as an actor in New York.

Can you imagine Bob Dylan getting booed off the stage at his high school talent show? What would have happened if Dr. Seuss's actually burned the manuscript of his first book, which he wanted to do after it was rejected by 27 publishers. It's also hard to fathom Steven Spielberg not getting accepted to UCLA film school because of average grades. And it's easy to forget that Steve Jobs was fired from Apple at thirty years old and Oprah Winfrey was once told she wasn't fit for television and was fired as a news anchor. **Thanks to Joe Green, author of THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IS PAVED WITH FAILURE for these great examples.*

The fact is everyone fails in life but it is a gift if you don't give up and are willing to learn, improve, and grow because of it.

Failure often serves as a defining moment, a cross road on the journey of your life. It gives you a test designed to measure your courage, perseverance, commitment and dedication. Are you a pretender who gives up after a little adversity or a contender who keeps getting up after getting knocked down?

Failure provides you with a great opportunity to decide how much you really want something. Will you give up? Or will you dig deeper, commit more, work harder, learn and get better? If you know that this is what you truly want you will be willing to pay the price that greatness requires. You will be willing to fail again and again in order to succeed.

On the other hand, sometimes failure causes you take a different path that is better for you in the long run. When I lost my race for city council of Atlanta at the age of 26 I realized politics and all its negativity wasn't for me. This set me on a new course and ultimately led me to move my family to Florida and find my purpose of writing and speaking. Sometimes we have to lose a goal to find our destiny. Sometimes a failure helps us see that we really don't want it and we want something else.

Whatever path failure guides you towards, it is always meant to give you a big serving of humble pie that builds your character, gives you perspective, grows your faith, and makes you appreciate your success later on. If you didn't fail you wouldn't become the kind of person who ultimately succeeds.

So the next time you fail don't let it keep you from the life you were born to live and the future you were meant to create. See failure as a test, a teacher, a detour to a better outcome and an event that builds a better you.

Failure is not meant to be final and fatal. It is not meant to define you. It is meant to refine you to be all that you are meant to be.

When you see failure as a blessing instead of a curse you will turn the gift of failure into a stepping stone that leads to the gift of success.