

## Failure

Ok. It comes in all shapes and sizes, at all the wrong times. When we've been successful, failure comes tumbling down as if we were standing directly under a cement truck. So now we're ever cognizant that we're glued into our body and any escape is temporary, the few hours of sleep we manage or the binge night of drinking that snowballs into a day of sleep and cheeseburgers. Or the real spiral down to where we believe life is not a gift, but a cruel joke and our attitude shifts away from optimism to pessimism. A sunny day is just bright light glaring in our eyes.

As the saying goes, "Success is fleeting" and so we're bound to hit failure at some point along THE WAY. Sometimes slam right into it. When in your life have you felt like you've failed? What do you think you've failed at? Has it ever occurred to you that some, if not all, of the great men and women of the world failed miserably along their path to success; Abraham Lincoln, Walt Disney, Enrico Caruso, Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, Tony Morrison, Demosthenes, the famous Greek orator to name a few. The common link between them was their motivation and determination to succeed.

Just to give a quick history lesson on the failures that built the character to create these persons who now live in infamy, Abraham Lincoln's first business deal, as a partner in a grocery store, failed; his first love died before he could marry her; and soon after suffered from a nervous breakdown. In 1838 he ran for speaker and was defeated; in 1848 he lost his re-nomination to Congress; in 1849 was rejected for land officer; in 1854 he lost his nomination for the Senate; in 1856 ran for Vice President and lost; and in 1858 again ran for Senate election and lost. But as we all know, Abraham Lincoln did succeed. He became America's 16th President and in 1863 issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Enough said.

Walt Disney, a pioneer in film and animation, went broke several times and had a nervous breakdown before he became successful.

Enrico Caruso's voice teacher, unimpressed by Caruso's voice commented, "It is like gold at the bottom of the Tiber, hardly worth digging for" and advised him to give up singing because he couldn't reach the notes. He didn't give up. He tried harder. And became known as one of the "King of Tenors."

Albert Einstein failed math.

Henry Ford was broke when he was 40.

Toni Morrison divorced, raising two boys on her own. In 1967, her first book, *The Bluest Eye*, was commercially unsuccessful. She resumed writing. By 1987 she was the first black woman to hold a named chair at an Ivy League University, Princeton University. In 1988 she won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. In 1993 she became the first black woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Demosthenes, the famous Greek orator, was shy and had a speech impediment that caused him to lose his father's wealthy estate. Determined to overcome his impediment he became one of the greatest orators of all time. 2,300 years later students still learn about this man.



The list goes on but the point is made. Sometimes we fail at the very thing we will succeed at later in life. Life is short, the discretionary time we have to live even shorter. If failure crippled the lives of these men, the world's history and current events would be shaped by something different. Thanks to their perseverance, slavery was abolished, Mickey Mouse daily brings smiles to thousands of children's faces.

Determination requires another ingredient: courage. And courage requires passion. We can mark failure as a test, a character builder, but we must mark it with the mindset that "Out of tragedy comes triumph". We are all our own Lincoln's, Einstein's, Disney's created with the desire in our heart to do something and succeed at it. Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, Chaplain to the United States Senate wrote in his book, *Facing the Future Without Fear: The Lord's constant word to us is "fear not!" There are 366 "fear not!" verses in the Bible - one for every day of the year and an extra one for leap year! Most of the admonitions are followed by a firm assurance of the Lord's presence or a stirring reminder of an aspect of His nature - such as faithfulness, goodness, loving-kindness, or intervening power in times of need.*

Failed? Cling to the faithfulness, goodness, loving-kindness, God's intervening power and "fear not" for success is just around the corner.