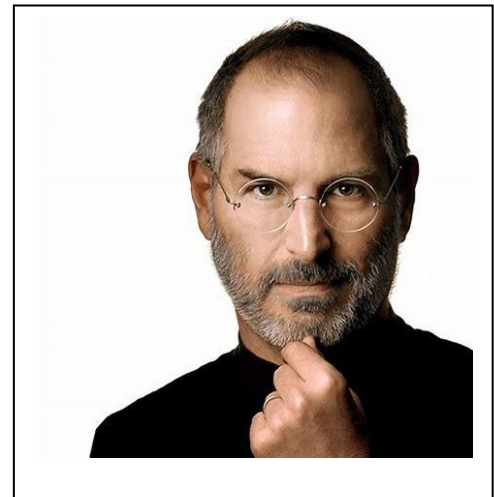
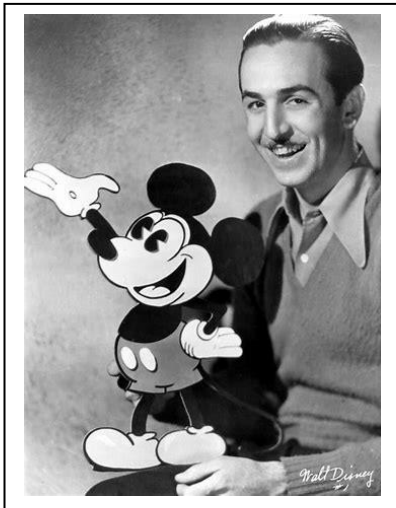
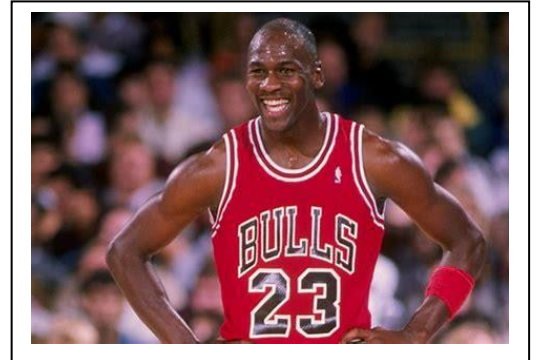
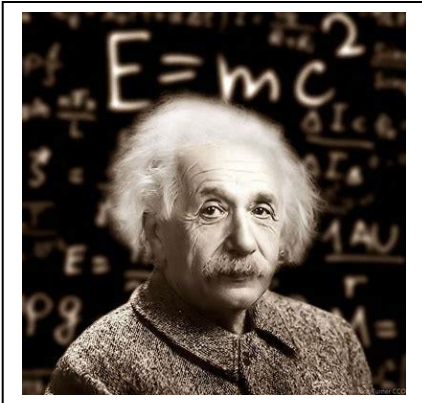


## MOTIVATION TO SUCCESS

YOU PROBABLY KNOW THESE PEOPLE BUT WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?



THEY ARE ALL PEOPLE WHO FAILED AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFE, BUT WE ALL KNOW THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE OR WERE SUCCESSFUL.

DO YOU THINK **FAILURE CAN LEAD TO SUCCESS?** HOW?

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1. **ALBERT EINSTEIN:** HE WAS NOT ABLE TO SPEAK UNTIL HE WAS FOUR AND HIS TEACHERS THOUGHT "HE WOULD NEVER AMOUNT TO MUCH" (NON SAREBBE ARRIVATO A MOLTO).
2. **JK ROWLING**
3. **MICHAEL JORDAN:** HE WAS CUT FROM HIS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM.
4. **WALT DISNEY:** HE WAS FIRED FROM A NEWSPAPER FOR "LACKING IMAGINATION AND HAVING NO ORIGINAL IDEAS". (TO FIRE = LICENZIARE; TO LACK = MANCARE)
5. **OPRAH WINFREY:** SHE WAS DEMOTED FROM HER JOB AS A NEWS ANCHOR BECAUSE "SHE WAS NOT FIT FOR TELEVISION". (TO DEMOTE = DEGRADARE).
6. **STEVE JOBS:** HE WAS REMOVED FROM THE COMPANY HE STARTED.

## JK ROWLING: THE BENEFITS OF FAILURE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kM8HJPbFnJg>

LISTEN FROM 2:54 TO 6:00; FROM 7:30 TO 10:30

I have wracked my mind and heart<sup>1</sup> for what I ought to<sup>2</sup> say to you today. I have asked myself what I wish I had known at my own graduation, and what important lessons I have learned in the 21 years that have expired between that day and this.

I have come up with<sup>3</sup> two answers. On this wonderful day when we are gathered together<sup>4</sup> to celebrate your academic success, I have decided to talk to you about **the benefits of failure**.

Half my lifetime ago, I **was** striking an uneasy balance<sup>5</sup> **between the ambition I had for myself, and what those closest to me expected of me**. I was convinced that the only thing I wanted to do, ever, was to write novels. However, my parents, both of whom came from impoverished backgrounds and neither of whom had been to college, took the view that my overactive imagination was an amusing personal quirk<sup>6</sup> that would never pay a mortgage<sup>7</sup>, or secure a pension.

So they hoped that I would take a vocational degree<sup>8</sup>; I wanted to study English Literature. **A compromise** was reached **that** in retrospect **satisfied nobody**, and I went up to study Modern Languages. Hardly had my parents' car rounded the corner at the end of the road than I ditched<sup>9</sup> German and scuttled off<sup>10</sup> down the Classics corridor. I cannot remember telling my parents that I was studying Classics; they might well have found out for the first time on graduation day.

I would like to make it clear, in parenthesis, that I do not blame my parents for their point of view. **The moment you are old enough to take the wheel, responsibility lies with you.**

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<sup>1</sup> To wrack one's brain = Lambiccarsi il cervello

<sup>2</sup> Ought to = dovere

<sup>3</sup> To come up with = Farsi venire in mente

<sup>4</sup> To gather together = Riunirsi, incontrarsi

<sup>5</sup> Stavo sbattendo contro un incerto equilibrio

<sup>6</sup> Quirk = fissazione

<sup>7</sup> Mortgage = mutuo

<sup>8</sup> Vocational degree = diploma professionale

<sup>9</sup> To ditch = saltare, evitare

<sup>10</sup> To scuttle off = muoversi frettolosamente

What is more, I cannot criticise my parents for hoping that I would never experience poverty. They had been poor themselves, and I have since been poor, and I quite agree with them that it is not an ennobling experience. Poverty entails<sup>11</sup> fear, and stress, and sometimes depression; it means a thousand petty<sup>12</sup> humiliations and hardships<sup>13</sup>. What I **feared** most for myself at your age was not poverty, but **failure**.

I think it fair to say that a mere **seven years after my graduation day, I had failed on an epic scale**. An exceptionally **short-lived marriage** had imploded, and I was **jobless, a lone parent**, and as **poor** as it is possible to be in modern Britain, without being homeless. The fears that my parents had had for me, and that I had had for myself, had both come to pass, and by every usual standard, **I was the biggest failure I knew**. Now, I am not going to stand here and tell you that failure is fun. That period of my life was a dark one.

**So why do I talk about the benefits of failure? Simply because failure meant a stripping away<sup>14</sup> of the inessential**. I stopped pretending<sup>15</sup> to myself that I was anything other than what I was, and began to direct all my energy into finishing the only work that mattered to me. **Had I really succeeded at anything else, I might never have found the determination to succeed in the one arena I believed I truly belonged**. I was set free, because my greatest fear had been realised, and I was still alive, and I still had a daughter whom I adored, and I had an old typewriter and a big idea. And so **rock bottom<sup>16</sup> became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life**.

You might never fail on the scale I did, but some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default.

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<sup>11</sup> To entail = implica

<sup>12</sup> Petty = meschino

<sup>13</sup> Hardship = difficoltà, avversità

<sup>14</sup> To strip away = togliere

<sup>15</sup> To pretend = fingere

<sup>16</sup> To hit rock bottom = toccare il fondo

**Failure** taught me things about myself that I could have learned no other way. I discovered that I had a strong **will**, and more **discipline** than I had suspected; I also found out that I had **friends** whose value was truly above the price of rubies<sup>17</sup>.

DISCUSS:

1. THE EXPRESSION "THE BENEFITS OF FAILURE" IS AN OXYMORON = A COMBINATION OF CONTRADICTORY WORDS. WHY ARE THESE TWO WORDS IN CONTRAST?
2. WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR HIGHLIGHT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF FAILURE?
3. DOES SOCIETY GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO FAIL ON THE ROAD TO THE FINAL GOAL?
4. THINK ABOUT PEOPLE WHO CONSIDERED HARDSHIPS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN.

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<sup>17</sup> Ruby = rubino

LOVELY IMAGE, ISN'T IT? I WOULD NOT SAY THAT A TODDLER, WHO FALLS DOWN WHILE LEARNING TO WALK, IS A FAILURE, WOULD YOU? ;-)