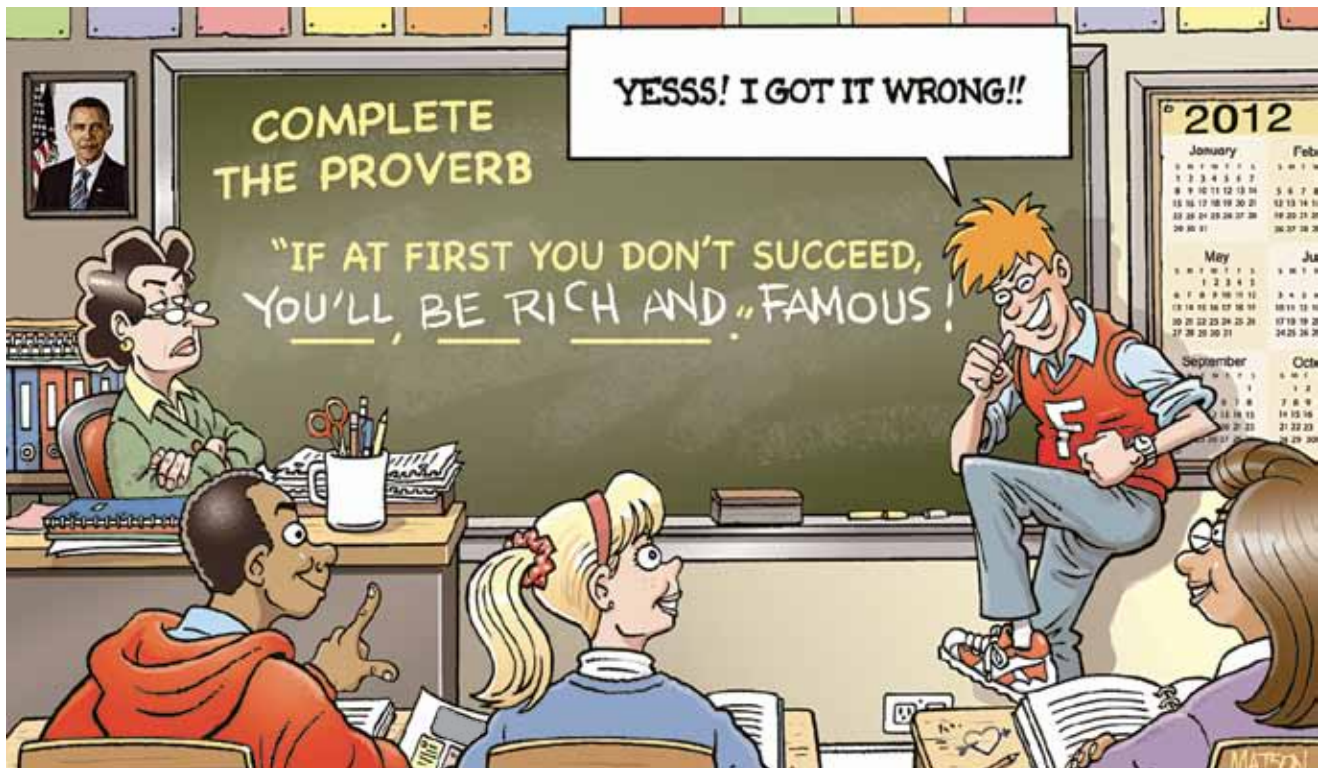


Are You a Loser?

IF YOU ARE, GREAT. BECAUSE STUDIES SHOW THAT TO BE A SUCCESS, FIRST YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO FAIL.



What is the secret to success? Loads of money? Good luck? Great teeth?

Nope. Cash, luck, and a nice smile can't hurt, but many experts agree that what successful people have in common is this: They were once failures.

Take George Washington, who lost two huge battles and was nearly fired before leading troops to victory in the Revolutionary War and becoming America's first

President. Then there's Steve Jobs, who developed a slew of failed products—and even got canned from Apple—before returning to change the world with the iPod, iPhone, and iPad.

The list of famous failures goes on: Pop icon Katy Perry was dropped by three different record labels. Nobel Prize winner Albert Einstein was expelled from school. Basketball star Jeremy Lin spent his early career sitting on the bench. Many of the world's most

successful people were once losers.

They probably felt humiliated, lost, and hopeless. Eventually, though, they figured out how to move forward. And that is the key to using failure to your advantage: the ability to dust yourself off and try again. And again. *And again.*

This is called resilience, and it's what can turn losers into winners. In fact, experts say that in terms of future success, resilience can be more important than brains or talent.

Utterly Humiliated

Seventeen-year-old Miranda, of Williamsburg, Virginia, still cringes when recalling her early experiences with the martial art tae kwon do. She started when she was 7, and for years, she lost every competition she entered.

“It was devastating,” Miranda says. Dejected, she decided to quit. But at her father’s urging, she reluctantly agreed to give it one more try. She worked harder and slowly started to improve. True, she never became the champion she’d dreamed of becoming, but she stuck with it long enough to earn her black belt by age 12.

“I could easily have said, ‘I’m a failure, I should never have tried,’” Miranda recalls. “But I’m really proud that I kept at it.”

The experience taught her that she could fail—and feel utterly humiliated and miserable—and still go on to succeed.

Go Ahead, Mess Up!

It’s no wonder many experts believe every kid and teen should experience failure. That’s right. They WANT you to mess up. Learning to cope with failure at a young age will help you handle bigger challenges later in life.

Miranda would agree. Today, she’s finally winning medals—in Irish step dancing. When she first started, she was bad at that too. But her experience in tae kwon do had built up her emotional strength. So she didn’t see her mistakes as failures, but as a part of

the process of achieving success.

Miranda is just one person in a long line of people to figure that out. One of history’s proudest failures was inventor Thomas Edison. According to legend, the first 1,000 times that Edison tried to create a light bulb, his invention didn’t work. So he kept experimenting until he finally found a way to build one that did.

“I didn’t fail 1,000 times,” Edison later said. “The light bulb was invented with 1,000 steps!”

Good Ol’ Hard Work

So what about you? Are you a successful failure? Say you do poorly on a math test. Do you think, “Oh, my teacher just hates me” or “Oh, I’m just bad at math”? People who don’t know how to fail tend to blame others for their mistakes or give

up without trying. They might feel like the whole world is against them. Often, they are insecure. After all, it takes a lot of confidence to admit your own shortcomings.

Part of being successful means having the courage to take a good, hard look at yourself and identify ways to do better next time. Well, that and a bit of patience. Sometimes it takes a while to get where you want to go.

Just look at the New York Knicks’ breakout star, Jeremy Lin. A few months ago, no one had even heard of him. For years, he was overlooked by coaches. Once, he was even called “the weakest player on the team.” When he finally

got a chance to play, he surprised everyone.

He was fantastic, unstoppable. And now he’s one of the most promising young athletes in pro basketball.

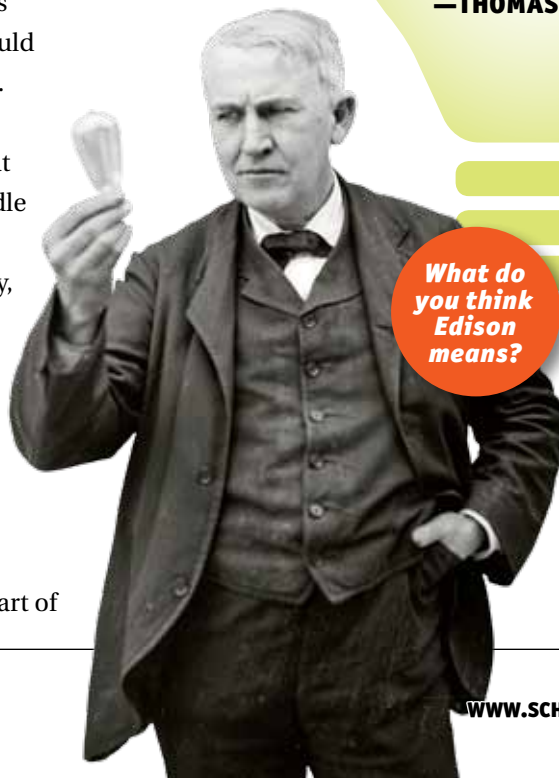
How did he do it?

Lin spent hundreds of hours with coaches and trainers. He arrived at practice hours before his teammates to do extra drills. In other words, he relied on good, old-fashioned hard work and perseverance.

So next time you fail a test, strike out at bat, or sing off-key, cheer up. With the right attitude, you could be onto something truly great. ●

“SHOW ME A THOROUGHLY SATISFIED MAN, AND I WILL SHOW YOU A FAILURE.”
—THOMAS EDISON

What do you think Edison means?



What Do You Think?

What does it take to be a successful failure?

Go back to the article and identify good and bad ways to deal with failure. Write them on the lines below.



DOs

HOW TO SUCCEED AT FAILING

1 Admit your own shortcomings
and find ways to improve.

2 _____

3 _____

DON'Ts

HOW TO FAIL AT FAILING

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

EXAMINE THE LIST OF DOs AND DON'Ts, THEN TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF. Are you a successful failure? State your conclusion in one sentence below. This can become a thesis statement for an essay on this topic.

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