

Generations

Success often doesn't come easy

As we begin a new year, this might be a good opportunity to give everyone an extra push as we get ready to tackle our future whether it be starting college, beginning a new job, joining the armed forces, putting to paper the novel you've been wrestling with for a couple of years, or auditioning for a part in a play.

The push I'm referring to is determination because it always triumphs over failure as long as you keep getting up, dusting yourself off, and keep trying.

There are many examples of people who didn't give up even when it looked bleak, but I always like to begin with one of our greatest dancers, Fred Astaire, who was rejected during a Hollywood screen test when the critic, who was probably very sorry years later, wrote in his notes "Can't act. Slightly bald. Dances a little."

More current, there's Mark Cuban, one of the four sharks from the "Shark Tank" TV show. Now, I always thought the brash billionaire and owner of the Dallas Mavericks was quite the show off, but I gained new respect for him when I read that he didn't rise from the ashes easily. From selling garbage bags to running newspapers and everything in between, Cuban struggled.

In 1982, at the age of 24, he moved to Dallas, Texas, on the word of some of his college friends, in a 1977 Fiat X19 that had a hole in the floorboard. Upon his arrival, he worked odd jobs, but couldn't find anything that he was good at. He failed at bartending because he couldn't open a bottle of wine without the cork falling in. He failed at short-order cooking because he never knew when the food was ready unless he cut off a

piece and tasted it. And he failed as a salesman at a computer distributor when he was fired after less than a year on the job.



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Frustrated, but determined, one year after he arrived in Dallas, he decided to start his own company, Micro Solutions, selling software, doing training and configuring networks and computers. At last, he had found his niche and something he was brilliant at because he grew that company to \$30 million in revenue.

Big business is tough in every generation. R.H. Macy didn't have it easy. He started seven failed businesses before finally hitting it big with his store in New York City.

The billion-dollar business that is Honda today was begun by Soichiro Honda who was turned down by Toyota Motor Corporation for a job after interviewing as an engineer, leaving him jobless for some time. He started making scooters at home, and spurred on by his neighbors, started his own business.

Akio Morita isn't a name that instantly stirs recognition, but no doubt you've heard and perhaps purchased Sony products. Morita's first Sony product was a rice cooker that unfortunately didn't cook rice so much as burn it, selling less than 100 units. This first setback didn't stop Morita and his partners as they pushed forward to create a multi-billion-dollar company.

Sometimes fame comes and goes just as quickly. Arianna Huffington is one of the most powerful businesswomen today, but no stranger to failure. While her first book was well-received, her second book was

rejected by 36 publishers. She didn't give up and is now the author of 13 books as well as the president and editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post Media Group.

We all love Peanuts cartoon characters, but Charles Schultz had every cartoon he submitted rejected by his high school yearbook staff. Even after high school, Schultz didn't have it easy, applying and being rejected for a position working with Walt Disney. Disney no doubt had made a major faux pas.

Often, a different path takes one in a more successful direction such as the path of Vera Wang. She started out as a competitive figure skater in her youth, but failed to make the 1968 U.S. Olympic Figure Skating Team. So, in 1971 she took a job as an assistant at Vogue where she was promoted to senior fashion editor within a year at 23. After 15 years with the magazine, Wang was passed over for the editor-in-chief position, but ended up where she needed to be and is now a successful and iconic fashion designer.

Ditto for western novelist Zane Grey who began his career as a dentist, something he quickly began to hate. He turned to writing, rejections poured in, and was told he had no business being a writer and should give it up. It took him years, but he got his first work published, leaving him with almost 90 books to his name and selling more than 50 million copies worldwide, including "Riders of the Purple Sage," considered to be the most popular western novel of all time.

Good luck in all you work to achieve in 2019 and beyond.

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