



Ascension

Ascension WI EAP

Self Doubt and Success

Sometimes when we experience failure, self doubt, or barriers to our success, we may view them as “signs” that we’re not on the right mission. Here are some examples of people who experienced self doubt, failures, or barriers and went on to become the people we know today.

John Steinbeck while working on his famous novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck wrote: “I am assailed by my own ignorance and inability... Sometimes, I seem to do a little good piece of work, but when it is done it slides into mediocrity.” That book helped land him the Pulitzer Prize in 1962.

Oprah Winfrey was publicly fired from her first television job as an anchor in Baltimore for getting “too emotionally invested in her stories.”

Michelangelo doubted his abilities. In the early 1500s, Pope Julius II asked Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Vatican’s Sistine Chapel. In response, he refused, saying that he was a sculptor and not a painter. Eventually, he accepted the Pope’s request and spent four years painting the chapel.

Mother Theresa suffered from a crisis in faith for years. The christian scriptures reveal she was not alone. Plenty of people who did something radical for the faith still had doubts. John the Baptist was radical. He doubted. Thomas was radical. He doubted. David was radical. He doubted. And so did Mother Teresa, who was canonized as a Saint on September 4, 2016.

George Washington, before his Inauguration, wrote to Supreme Court Chief Justice John Rutledge: “I greatly apprehend that my countrymen will expect too much from me. I fear, if the issue of public measures should not correspond with their sanguine expectations, they will turn the extravagant praises which they are heaping upon me at this moment into equally extravagant censures.”

Vera Wang failed to make the 1968 US Olympic figure-skating team. Then she became an editor at *Vogue*, but was passed over for the editor-in-chief position. She began designing wedding gowns at age 40 and today is one of the premier designers in the fashion industry.

Vincent Van Gogh struggled with self-doubt and behavioral issues, causing him to go in and out of mental institutions and at one point, even cutting off a part of his own ear. Known for being in a constant crisis of self-doubt, which helped fuel much of his career and is portrayed in many of his self portraits, Van Gogh once said, “If you hear a voice within you say you cannot paint, then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced.”

Terry Gross of NPR was fired from her first teaching job after approximately six weeks. A newly graduated English major, “I couldn’t keep the students in the classroom, I couldn’t teach them a lesson, I couldn’t do anything,” she told Marc Maron onstage at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Her tenure lasted all of six weeks. Gross then discovered radio, and her long-running interview show, *Fresh Air*.

Sources:

Mother Teresa Biography: www.biography.com

29 Famous People who Failed before they Succeeded: www.businessinsider.com

These Artists, Authors and Leaders Battled Self-Doubt Before They Made History: www.entrepreneur.com