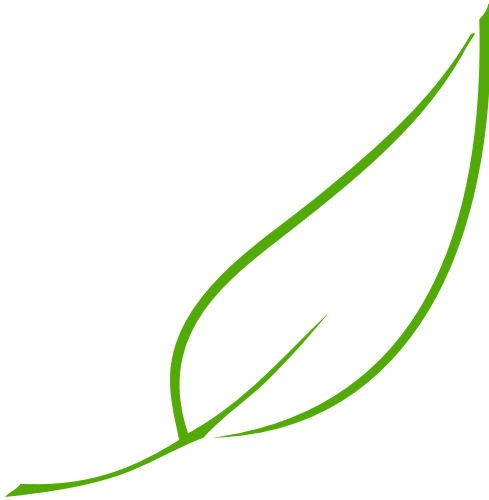


FAILURE AND FREDERICK-THE- LARGE

by Robert L. Crowe



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You probably won't believe it, but I once took a speech class. One of the things I learned was that when you choose a topic for a speech, you should pick a subject you know. And I've done that. I'm going to speak about failure. I know a lot about failures. That's not just my opinion. I have references.

We had to do a writing exercise in school. The teacher had us write down a list of our own faults. I wrote and wrote and was still writing when the teacher said to stop. Then, we were asked to write down the faults of our best friend. And I couldn't think of any. That was the point. We are always harder on ourselves. We're our own worst critic and usually need someone else to confirm our positive attributes. There isn't always a "someone else" to provide positive support.

Did you know that Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame had his recipe turned down by restaurants over 1000 times before it was accepted? Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor because he "lacked imagination." Albert Einstein couldn't write until he was seven years old. Thomas Edison was told in school that he was "too stupid to learn anything." Oprah was fired as a TV reporter because she was "unfit" for television appearances.

Well ... knowing there are a lot of famous people who were tagged as failures only gives brief solace. These are a few examples of people who overcame that label. There are no statistics that record the number of people in the past who didn't overcome that label. We can't do anything about the past. What about now? What about the young people now in our schools who are experiencing frustration and rejection ... who are between successes, or have never had success. I wonder how they feel about themselves ... how they feel about education.

Think for a minute about the front door of a school. Think about the problems that little shoulders carry when they come through that door. It's a good thing we don't know all of the burdens they bring with them. I'm sure it would depress us



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