



Banned from school for hacking



Co-founded a traffic monitoring company, Traf-O-Data, which failed



Dropped out of Harvard



Got a cream pie thrown in his face by a protester



Accused of stealing from a rival



Committed to donating half of his wealth over his lifetime

"It's fine to celebrate success, but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure."



Bill Gates



Net worth: \$91.6 Billion



Didn't realize he was adopted until he was 10



Worked as a McDonald's fry cook



Struggled with physics in college and switched to computer science instead



Turned down jobs at Intel and Bell Labs for a small startup, which failed within two years



Worked out of a garage in Seattle, in which he built his own office furniture

cadabra.com

Quit his job to start Cadabra, which he later renamed Amazon



Job-hopped within the finance industry



Launched a failed auction site to try to take down eBay



Now, he's one of the wealthiest people in history

"Most large organizations embrace the idea of invention but are not willing to suffer the string of failed experiments necessary to get there."



Jeff Bezos
amazon

Net worth: \$105.1 Billion



Contracted pneumonia at nine months old



Adopted by his great-aunt and -uncle



Went to a public college, dropped out, enrolled at the University of Chicago, then dropped out again



Started a business that struggled at first, forcing him to mortgage his house



Worked odd jobs for 8 years



Had to fire most of the people in his company to get it back on track in the 1990s



Now, he owns 98% of the island of Lanai in Hawaii

"I have had all of the disadvantages required for success."



Larry Ellison

ORACLE®

Net worth: \$61.4 Billion



Dropped out of school at 16 to join the Army but was rejected for being underage; joined the Red Cross instead



Fired at 22 from a newspaper because the editor felt he "lacked imagination"



Lost the rights to his most successful character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit



Started Laugh-O-Gram Studio, which went bankrupt after two years



Went completely broke, then came up with a new character on the train from Manhattan to Hollywood: Mickey Mouse

"The difference in winning and losing is most often not quitting."



Walt Disney

The **WALT DISNEY** Company

Net worth: \$5 Billion



Was abused as a child by relatives



Got pregnant and lost the baby at 14



Took a talk show called AM Chicago from the lowest-rated to the highest-rated show within a few months



She's won Emmy awards, the Lifetime Achievement award, and was nominated for an Academy Award



Was humiliated and sexually harassed during her first job as a TV news anchor



She's the first female African American billionaire, and has donated millions of dollars to charities, including her own charities: The Angel Network and The Oprah Winfrey Foundation

"Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another stepping-stone to greatness."



Oprah Winfrey

OWN

OPRAH WINFREY NETWORK

Net worth: \$2.8 Billion



Demoted from partner to the information technology division of his company after 13 years as a stock trader



Laid off at age 39



To land their first client, he promised, "I'll get it done in six months, and if you don't like it, you don't have to pay for it"



Created a Wall Street firm that pitched technology built on better and more accessible data



The company now has more than 300,000 terminal subscriptions

"America is built around this premise that you can do it, and there are an awful lot of people who are unlikely to have done it who did."



Michael Bloomberg

Bloomberg

Net worth: \$52.3 Billion



Fled from poverty in Scotland and came to America with his parents at 13



Earned \$1.20 per week at a textile factory



Dodged the draft by paying for a substitute



Worked as a telegrapher and found a job at the railroad



Though he was largely considered a robber barron, he donated massive sums of wealth toward philanthropic causes, funding more than 3,000 libraries

"And here is the prime condition of success, the great secret: Concentrate your energy, thought, and capital exclusively upon the business in which you are engaged."



Andrew Carnegie

CARNEGIE
- STEEL CO. -

Net worth: \$310 Billion*

*at its height in today's dollars



Pedaled 70 miles on his bike to give tours to tourists



Flunked his college entrance exam twice



Applied to Harvard 10 times and got rejected



Applied to KFC with a group of 24 other people; they hired 23 of them, but he got rejected



Was told that his escrow payment service was a stupid idea



Created an "ugly" website, "China Yellow Pages," with a budget of \$20,000



Now, he's one of the richest people in China

"In life, it's not how much we achieved, it's how much we've gone through the tough days and mistakes."



Jack Ma



Alibaba.com

Net worth: \$41.5 Billion



Got thrown down a staircase at school



Had an existential crisis at 14 and read *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* looking for answers



Dropped out of Stanford University's PhD program



Got fired as the CEO of Paypal while he was on vacation



Slept in the office and showered at the local YMCA as his company, Zip2, was getting off the ground



Invested \$40 million in his own company to save it from going broke during the recession



Today, he runs companies from SolarCity to SpaceX to Tesla Motors to fulfill his dream of saving humanity

"Failure is an option here. If things are not failing, you are not innovating enough."



Elon Musk

TESLA

Net worth: \$21.4 Billion



Struggled in school because of his dyslexia



Dropped out of school at 16: His headmaster said he'd either end up in prison or become a millionaire.

STUDENT

Created a magazine called *Student*, which often had cash flow problems



Wanted to start an airline, but in the initial test of their only plane, a flock of birds flew into the engine



Created a mail-order record business called Virgin to help fund the magazine; he claims the company's big break was Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells"



Started a soda company, car company, bridal gown company, and digital download company, which all failed



From the punk rock scene to space, his Virgin Group now controls more than 400 companies

"My attitude has always been, if you fall flat on your face, at least you're moving forward. All you have to do is get back up and try again."



Richard Branson



Net worth: \$5 Billion

Sources:

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