



IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

In his book, *Breakthrough* (Little, Brown), David CM Carter reveals 20 secrets garnered from 17 years of mentoring to celebrities, CEOs, entrepreneurs and philanthropists. He believes they can help you live your best life. **By Jabulile Ngwenya**

Romantic poet John Keats once said: “The problems of the world cannot possibly be solved by sceptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by obvious realities. We need men who can dream of things that never were.” Such individuals often have to overcome fear in pursuing their dreams. In addition, these visionaries must cope with naysayers who believe their dreams are unworthy and unattainable. In the chapter “Failure Isn’t Falling Down... It’s Staying Down”, Carter tells the story of famed actor Sylvester Stallone who was rejected in multiple auditions. He could barely feed

Skywalker in the movie *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, who must learn to use “The Force”. When Skywalker attempts to lift a rocket out of a swamp, he only manages to move it halfway and then gives up. Yoda, the Jedi Master, however, with the help of “The Force”, lifts it up easily. Astonished, Skywalker exclaims: “I don’t believe it!” – to which Yoda replies: “And that is why you fail.”

“It’s a simple choice,” writes Carter. “You have to press ‘Eject’ and replace the tape with another message; a different story.”

History’s filled with people who failed several times before achieving great things.

any obstacle and achieve any aim we have in life, no matter what our age, background, colour or gender,” writes Carter.

But you need to believe this. You need to be aware of the story you tell yourself. Change won’t happen overnight, but with a series of baby steps – what Carter calls a “five-degree course correction” – you can transform your life. Becoming aware of the language you use in your internal narrative can make you feel more positive. Instead of telling yourself: “I suck at tennis” every time you walk out to play, try replacing it with: “I’m going to do the best I can.” This simple mind-shift will help you feel more confident, relaxed and able to enjoy the game.

Carter cites the example of setting a goal. There are two types of people, he writes: those who move towards what they want and those who move away from what they don’t want. He found that individuals who were seeking dating partners online, but struggling to connect with anyone, usually focused on what they didn’t want. He asked them to shift their focus to what they *did* want. In every case, the person found a date in a short time.

Getting what you want takes persistence. It takes focus and rising above your fears.

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10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Highly successful people have a vocabulary based on positive things. So ask yourself the following empowering, possibility-creating questions:

1. What am I happy about?
2. What am I excited about?
3. What am I proud of?
4. Who do I love?
5. Who loves me?
6. What am I truly grateful for?
7. Am I being the best version of myself?
8. How can I turn this around?
9. How can I learn from this?
10. Who have I helped today? 🌈

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his family, had pawned his wife’s jewellery and sold his dogs when he wrote the *Rocky* script. Hollywood loved it, but Stallone insisted on playing the leading role. At one point, a studio offered him \$325 000, without playing the role he wanted. He finally sold it for \$35 000 – and the leading role.

People who succeed choose to do so, despite the setbacks they may face along the way. For them, failure simply isn’t an option and fear isn’t a deterrent. “I believe the idea that life’s inherently disappointing is a form of laziness, a form of unconsciousness and a form of numbing ourselves to its potential joys,” writes Carter. People are born into different circumstances and while fear may be a common trait, so is the choice to move beyond it. Unfortunately, many people live in a state of unawareness, with an inner voice constantly telling them why they won’t succeed. So, because they believe circumstances are against them, that life won’t work for them and they have little self-worth, they do indeed fail.

Carter refers to the character Luke

British statesman Winston Churchill suffered through school, plagued by a lisp, battling academically and failing sixth grade. His political career was marked by repeated failures every time he ran for office – until the age of 66, when he became Prime Minister, a position he held twice.

Sidney Poitier was born into poverty and lived on the streets of New York after deciding he wanted an acting career. At his first audition, the casting director told him he had no chance of succeeding and advised him to stick to dishwashing. In due course, Poitier became the first black person to win an Oscar and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.

Scottish author JK Rowling was penniless, divorced and clinically depressed when her first manuscript in the *Harry Potter* series – based on bedtime tales she told her children – was finally published, having been rejected 12 times. The books went on to become the biggest-selling works in modern literary history.

“We have inside ourselves all the resources we’ll ever need to overcome