

Steeple News

August 2025 Success and Failure

We have been reminded from time to time that men were born to succeed and not for failure. However, sometimes the line between success and failure can be very hard to determine. Very often we throw up our hands and quit when a little more effort, patience, and persistence could have turned a failure into a profound success.

I think that the only real failure is to not even try. Failure is not falling down; it is staying down. One great factor that makes for success in everyday life is the ability to draw knowledge, as well as positive results, from defeat. We are more likely to conquer difficulties when we believe in our own ability to do so. Confidence in ourselves can inspire the confidence of others. It is a contagious kind of courage that carries others along with it.

We can point to the lives of many people who were born with a serious disability, who with courage, hard work, and persistence overcame the disability and lived a good, healthy, normal and productive life. Two people can be struck with the same disability, one will overcome it, the second will give up. The difference is not in what they were afflicted with but in how they each responded to it.

Courage, faith, optimism. These are the things that show us what men are made of. There is always an option available to us – to seek values and opportunities in any situation. “Attitudes” said one psychiatrist, “are more important than facts.” A handicap is a fact. A hardship is a fact. But when one person is defeated by a fact, another is stimulated. Where one merely complains about hardship, another rises to the challenge. The poet Joaquin Miller, inspired by the log of Columbus’s first voyage across the uncharted Atlantic Ocean, wrote “What shall we do when hope is gone? ...Sail on! Sail on! Sail on and on!” Men were indeed born to succeed, and to exceed at overcoming difficulty is the greatest success of all.

Rev. Hans Lillejord