

Crumble it up - Self acceptance

EXPLANATION:

Self-acceptance involves embracing who you are and your strengths. But it also involves acknowledging and owning your mistakes and weaknesses as they give you opportunities to grow. This activity explores people who are considered successful but have made mistakes and persevered to achieve their goals. . Students are encouraged to acknowledge a mistake or challenge 'crumble it' up and throw it away!

YEAR LEVELS: Years 11–12

STUDENT GROUPING: Group discussion and individual activity

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 60 mins approx.

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Link to general capabilities in the English curriculum

Personal and social capability

Students develop personal and social capability in English by enhancing their communication skills, teamwork and capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others. Close study of texts assists students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, beliefs and responses by interacting with a range of texts. *English* actively assists students in the development of communication skills needed for analysis, research and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. Students work collaboratively in teams and independently as part of their learning and research endeavours.

SCOPE OF TASK:

Wellbeing is heightened when people affirm their present worth, understand their strengths and weaknesses and realise their potential! Self-acceptance is the capacity to take a compassionate stance toward ourselves. It is the ability to effectively learn from mistakes, rather than allowing them to internally disrupt psychological wellbeing. Even the people considered most successful in life have had challenges and made mistakes. Some examples of well-known people's struggles, mistakes and successes include:



Oprah Winfrey

Oprah was born in rural 1950s Mississippi to an impoverished teenage mother. She suffered abuse from the age of 9 and ran away from home at 13, only to become pregnant at 14. She lost this baby. But Oprah was able to turn the tables on this disastrous upbringing through guts and grit. She moved to Tennessee to live with her father returned to school and did well in speech and debate. In college she majored in communications and landed her first post-graduation job at a Nashville station. Soon after that, she was hired as a primetime news co-anchor, but this did not go smoothly either and the show was axed! Even Oprah herself looks back on these years as a failure. But she did not give up. Instead, she took stock of the situation and began investing in human interest stories instead of hard news. Oprah is uniquely capable as an empathetic talk show host and her interviews with celebrities are high impact. But her success is so much more than that. Oprah has built a media empire, having created O Magazine, Oxygen Media, HARPO productions and HARPO Films. She has said publicly “I don't think of myself as a businesswoman” but she runs one of the most successful businesses in America.



Colonel Sanders

Colonel Harland Sanders is a world-known figure as the marketing image of Kentucky Fried Chicken. The story of Colonel Harland Sanders is an example of how perseverance, dedication, and learning from your mistakes can create success regardless of your age.

At the age of sixty-five, after running a restaurant for several years, Harland Sanders found himself penniless. He retired and received his first social security check which was for one hundred and five dollars. But he wanted to share his fried chicken recipe and had a vision that he could sell it to restaurants. Harland travelled door to door to houses and restaurants all over his local area. But whilst everyone liked his chicken no one wanted to buy his recipe. According to reports, some 1,009 people rejected him. Instead of giving up, he hit the road and began trying to sell his franchise-model chicken restaurant, eventually finding success with a restaurant outside of Utah. It became the first Kentucky Fried Chicken, and the restaurant tripled sales in a year, mostly from the colonel's chicken.

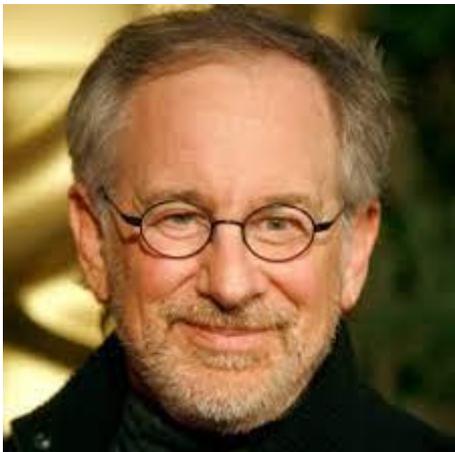
By 1964, Colonel Harland Sanders had 600 franchises and he eventually sold his company for \$2 million dollars!



Walt Disney

Walt Disney is remembered for his many successes—for Mickey Mouse, for Donald Duck, for Disneyland. But he also saw his share of failures including a bankruptcy and poor mental health. Very early in his career a former newspaper editor informed him that he had no imagination and lacked any good ideas. He once said, “You may not realise it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.”

In 1921, Disney formed his first animation where he made a deal with a distribution company to supply his cartoons but not get paid six months later. He was forced to dissolve his company and at one point could not pay his rent. He reportedly survived by eating dog food! Also, When Walt first tried to get MGM studios to distribute Mickey Mouse in 1927, he was told that the idea would never work because a giant mouse on the screen would terrify women. In 2020 the Walt Disney Company held assets worth more than 200 billion U.S. dollars!



Steven Spielberg

Steven Spielberg is one of the most commercially successful directors in history. In addition to filmmaking, he wrote and produced many TV series and co-founded the production company DreamWorks. But Spielberg was rejected by the California School of Cinematic Arts three times, and still became one of the most famous directors in movie history! He eventually attended another school, only to drop out and become a director before finishing. Thirty-five years after dropping out of his degree, he returned to school in 2002 and finally completed his Bachelor’s degree. Steven Spielberg's net worth is reportedly \$3.7 billion.



J.K. Rowling

Rowling was a struggling writer and a broke, single mother. She was attending school, trying to write a novel and it took years of perseverance to become the success she is today. J.K. Rowling herself said “By every usual standard, I was the biggest failure I knew.” Soon after conceiving the idea for *Harry Potter*, Rowling began writing but stopped due to the devastating death of her mother. Things didn’t go to plan and J.K. Rowling struggled with depression, raising a child on her own and living off unemployment benefits. She did resume work on her book but only while her daughter was asleep. When Rowling finally finished the first three chapters, she sent the manuscript off to a publisher who were not interested in the project. She sent it to more publishers and she received many rejection letters, but she didn’t let it stop her. Today her book series has been translated into 73 languages, sold millions of copies and accrued over \$20 billion through movie adaptations and sponsorships.



Bill Gates

Bill Gates, one of the world’s wealthiest men now as co-founder of Microsoft. But the billionaire wasn’t always as successful as he is today. In fact, Bill Gates had to go through failure first before he could reach the top.

One early considered ‘failure’ for Bill Gates was his drop out from college. He was enrolled at Harvard University back in 1973. He was going to pursue a law career, but he changed his plans much to his parents’ disappointment.

Many people don’t know, but prior to Microsoft, Gates and Paul Allen his business partner had a company known as Traf-O-Data. This was also deemed a failure. The company did not generate an income that allowed it to continue operating. Between 1974 and 1980, Traf-O-Data totalled net losses of \$3,494. Although this was a failure, none of the two businessmen lost their dedication – if anything, they were more dedicated to making Microsoft even better. This was an experience that the two could learn from. Today Bill Gate’s is one of three people in the world with a net worth exceeding \$100 billion.

1. Discuss with students what a mistake, fault, error or oversight is. Questions to elicit student's prior knowledge and understanding could include:
 - What is a mistake?
 - When you make a mistake, how does it make you feel?
 - Is it OK to make a mistake?
 - Does a mistake define you?
 - Why is it important to accept your strengths and weaknesses?
 - How do you recover from making a mistake?
2. Share with students the stories of the people in history who have had 'failures' or made mistakes but have gone on to have successful careers and fulfilling lives. Ask students to reflect on these people's mistakes, why they are deemed as mistakes and how they recovered. Can they think of other people who may have experienced setbacks, recovered and not let a mistake define them? Ask students to share details about other stories.
3. After the group have explored stories of 'failures' and how these did not define the person discuss how the individuals adopted self-acceptance strategies.
4. Share with the students the objective of the activity – to explore the power of seeing mistakes in a positive light and that negative feelings are valid and contribute to self-acceptance.
5. Ask students to consider a mistake they have made and to write down the mistake on a piece of paper. Next, ask them to crumple the paper into a ball and hurl it at the wall, ceiling or at the board. Ask them to use all the frustration they felt when they make a mistake. Give them a minute, and then ask them to pick up the paper. Ask students to uncrumple the paper, read their writing and look over their mistake again.
6. Discuss with the students how easy it was to throw away their mistake. Remind them that self-acceptance is the ability to embrace the good, valuable, or positive about yourself as well as the less desirable parts. Self-acceptance requires self-discovery, a willingness to look objectively at ourselves and the ability to celebrate the strengths that outweigh our weaknesses.
7. Now ask the students to crumple the paper up again for a final time and throw it in the bin. This final action is to symbolise that the mistake is in the past, it is accepted and been learnt from. The mistake is not critical to future behaviour or success.
8. In closing students can reflect on the importance of self-acceptance and a feeling of self-satisfaction with self

RESOURCES:

- Computers and internet access for further searches about people who have struggled and still succeeded
- Paper to write mistakes on