**Fired First**

**En route to winning two Super Bowls with the New England Patriots, coach Bill Belichick was fired by the Cleveland Browns. His philosophy is straight and simple. “Harvey,” he said, “I don’t worry too much about the decisions I can’t control.” *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**One of the biggest names in Hollywood got his start because he could fall off a horse. Gary Cooper wore his best suit to a tryout for a western movie, but suspicious producers thought the big actor was a dude and made him prove he could ride--and fall off--a horse. He went on to a career that culminated in the classic High Noon, but before he made it big, Coop was fired and rehired by the movie bosses seven times. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 8)***

**The things you get fired for when you're young are the same things you get Lifetime Achievements for when you're old. *(Francis Ford Coppola, director)***

**In her 30-year career, one broadcaster has been fired 18 times. But every time, she set her sights on something bigger and better. When no mainland radio station would hire her because they thought women couldn't attract an audience, she moved to Puerto Rico and polished her Spanish. When a wire service refused to send her to an uprising in the Dominican Republic, she scraped together money to fly there an sell her own stories. In 1981, she was fired by a New York radio station for not having kept up with the times and was out of work for more than a year. One day she pitched her idea for a new talk show to a man who worked for NBC radio. "I'm sure the network would be interested," he said -- and then left NBC. She met another man at NBC radio and presented her idea for show. He also praised her ideas, and then disappeared. So she persuaded a third men to hire her -- but he wanted her to host a show on a political radio station. "I don't know enough about national politics to make this work," she told her husband. Yet in the summer of 1982 she went on the air. Drawing on her familiarity with microphones and her easy, confessional style, she talked about what the Fourth of July meant to her and invited callers to do the same. Listeners connected immediately, and she became known as the "Dear Abby" of the airwaves. Today, Sally Jessy Raphael is the two-time Emmy-award winning host of her own television show, reaching eighty million viewers daily throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. "I could have let those 18 firings prevent me from doing what I wanted," she says. "Instead, I let them spur me on." *(Suzanne Chazin, in Reader's Digest)***

**Neil Diamond was on his way to becoming the first member of his family to graduate from college when he dropped out in his senior year to take a songwriting job with a music-publishing company. “It was a chance to step into my career,” he explains. The job lasted only four months. Eventually, he was fired by five other music publishers. “I loved writing music and lyrics,” he says, “and I thought, ‘There’s got to be a place for me somewhere.’” After eight years of knocking around and bringing songs to publishers and still being basically nowhere, I met two very successful producers and writers, Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich, who liked the way I sang. They took me from being a guy with a guitar to a guy who could make real records,” he adds. *(Claire Carter, in Parade magazine)***

**Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor for lack of ideas. Walt Disney also went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland. *(Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen, in Chicken Soup for the Soul)***

**Mackay’s Moral: The way to douse a firing is using what you learned for an even better hiring. *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**Thomas Edison was fired from the Grand Track Railway for accidentally setting the baggage car on fire with one of his chemical experiments. The conductor threw him off the train. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 120)***

**William Faulkner failed to graduate from high school because he didn’t have enough credits. He bummed around the United States and Canada, enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force, trying to get into a university and later working as a postmaster until he was fired for reading on the job. He then tried writing and had five books finished by 1930 but failed to earn enough money to support a family. But he kept going and became popular in the mid 1930’s. He eventually received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 37)***

**In one way more than any other have clans throughout history rid themselves of unwanted people among them. No, not by murder, which often enough has been taboo. What they've done is set fire to the unwanted's places. They've literally fired them out. To get "fired" from a job is an allusion to that sorry old evil. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Walt Disney was fired from one of his first jobs, and both Disney and Henry Ford saw ventures end up in bankruptcy before they made it big time. *(Patricia Sellers, in Reader's Digest)***

**A man who had just lost his job was talking with a friend. "Why did the foreman fire you?" the friend asked. "Oh," he replied, "you know how foreman are. They stand around with their hands in their pockets watching everybody else work." "Sure," the friend said. "Everybody knows that, But why did he fire you?" "Jealousy," the man said. "All the other workers thought I was the foreman." *(Howard Wiener, in The Saturday Evening Post)***

**I was fired from my first three jobs, which in a funny way gave me courage to go into business for myself. *(Albert C. Fuller, founder Fuller Brush)***

**The road to her dream was not easy. Katharine Hepburn was fired from several stage roles, criticized for talking too fast, considered ornery and difficult to work with, and evaluated as too bony, thin, and mannish to be successful on stage. Accompanied by unwavering determination, Hepburn sought the assistance of a voice and drama coach who nurtured her through a variety of stage roles. Eventually, one of her performances drew great reviews and led to a movie contract. Today, Hepburn says, “I came to think that the more insulting the press was, the more it stimulated me." And stimulated she stayed. Hepburn went on to win the Academy Award for best actress four times, has published an autobiography and is in great demand for interviews. How amazing that the woman who was told she had a voice like a rasp and a skeleton body achieved superstar status. (Glenn Van Ekeren, in Speaker's Sourcebook II, p. 107)**

**Thomas Jacob Hilfiger, born in Elmira, New York, in 1951, knew what he wanted to do from an early age: design clothing. While still in high school, he worked at a gas station, saved his money to buy used jeans, which he resold to other kids. He used the money he earned to open a chain of hip clothing stores called People’s Place and got his start as a designer by telling the jeans-makers what styles would sell better. (He was right.? After working for other clothing companies for several years (Jordache fired him – they were wrong), he struck gold in 1985 with a line of urban-preppy clothing – Tommy Hilfiger. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader, p. 108)***

**A wise friend talked Bernie Marcus out of wasting his time suing after he was fired as CEO of Handy Dan Home Improvement Centers. Instead, Bernie went on to start the Home Depot. Today, this $65 billion compaNy has 1,700 stores. *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**In 1978, Lee Iacocca was fired as president of Ford Motor Company by chairman Henry Ford II. *(Associated Press)***

**Somerset Maugham, the English writer, once wrote a story about a janitor at St. Peter's Church in London. One day a young vicar discovered that the janitor was illiterate and fired him. Jobless, the man invested his meager savings in a tiny tobacco shop, where he prospered, bought another, expanded, and ended up with a chain of tobacco stores worth several hundred thousand dollars. One day the man's banker said, “You've done well for an illiterate, but where would you be if you could read and write?” “Well,” replied the man, “I'd be janitor of St. Peter's Church in Neville Square.” (Bits & Pieces)**

**A young man was fired from his job as a reporter on a San Francisco newspaper and was told by the editor, “You just don't know how to use the English language. This isn't a kindergarten for amateur writers." This fellow went on to prove his editor wrong, authoring over 300 short stories and several novels, including The Jungle Book and Captains Courageous. The gentleman, Rudyard Kipling, was awarded a Nobel Prize for literature in 1907. *(Tidbits)***

**President Harry Truman fired Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the U.N. forces fighting in Korea, on April 11, 1951. MacArthur’s public criticism of Truman’s policy to wage a limited war, and his unauthorized threat to attack China if there is no quick truce, amounted to “rank insubordination,” Truman wrote in his diary. MacArthur, a popular World War II hero, arrived home to ticker tape parades; a later Senate investigation of the dismissal supported the president’s action. Truman appointed Lt. Gen. Matthew Ridgway to replace MacArthur in Korea, where the war ended in an armistice in 1953. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**You never ask why you were fired, because if you do, they’re liable to tell you. *(Jerry Coleman, baseball announcer)***

**Keep in mind that Lee Iacocca got fired by Henry Ford and that Ronald Reagan’s contract was terminated by Warner Brothers. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 120)***

**Robert Redford was fired from a string of jobs, stretching from oil company roustabout to carpenter. He told me: “I got fired from jobs I should have been fired from. The lesson I learned was that I wasn’t meant to do any of those things.” His attitude did a 180-degree-turn when he realized that he should do what he was good at. After acting in 40 movies, directing six and producing 23, the Sundance Kid has become the dean of American cinema. He’s also founded the prestigious Sundance Institute to help young filmmakers do what they love. *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**Seinfeld wasn’t Jerry Seinfeld’s first sitcom. He played the governor’s speechwriter on Benson, but was fired after three episodes. *(David Hoffman, in Who Knew?, p. 161)***

**Ignaz Semmelweis was fired from his Vienna hospital post for requiring his maternity staff to wash their hands. (*G. Edward Griffin, in World Without Cancer)***

**Joe Torre has four World Series rings. He earned them after he turned 55, had racked up more than a thousand major league defeats and had been fired as a manager by three teams. *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**Donald Trump weighs in with this wisdom: “The only advice I can give to a young person who has been fired is to keep chugging. Get a good job. Then do a better job of performing it.” Young or old, it doesn’t matter. *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**Not to be rude, but 240,000 Americans would be out of work if not for Charles R. Walgreen's middle finger. As a teenager in Dixon, Illinois, in the 1890s, Walgreen worked in a shoe factory. One day, his hand got caught in a stitching machine, severing the top joint of his middle finger and ending his hoped-for career in sports. The doctor treating young Charles proposed an alternative path: Why not try pharmacy? Walgreen's first job as a pharmacist's apprentice paid $4 a week and ended with his getting fired (he forgot to shovel the snow out front). He opened his own pharmacy in 1901 (someone else could shovel!) and by 1929 operated 397 stores. Today, Walgreens is the second-largest U.S. pharmacy chain after CVS and fills more than 1.1 billion prescriptions a year. *(Reader's Digest, March, 2019, issue, page 82)***

**What if some of the most successful people in the world told you, "We got fired! . . . And it's the best thing that ever happened to us." Sound like a stretch? Well, it's no baloney -- and it's the title of my newest book. In it, I chronicle rock solid professional comebacks, and even reveal how yours truly was drummed out of a job when I was just starting out. Others to bounce back include Larry King, Lesley Visser, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Robert Redford. The important thing is that they were all also hired. Each went on to become an ever bigger success as a result of being fired. *(Harvey Mackay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

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