

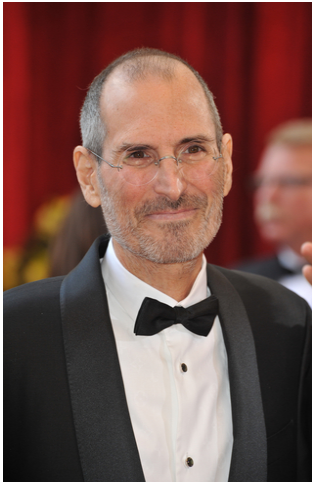
# Tony Parham's Blog

innovation, leadership, life

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## Steve Jobs Was a Failure!



Much was written last month regarding Steve Jobs' resignation as CEO of Apple Computer. Various articles chronicled the numerous contributions which Jobs made in technology, business, film and (global!) culture.

However, my favorite profile was penned by the Boston Globe's Hiawatha Bray, who was quite vocal about the many **failures** which Jobs also experienced. What was most enlightening about Bray's profile was the way it pointed out that many of Jobs' failures served as the foundation and starting point for future successes. (Indeed, Jobs' famous 2005 Stanford commencement ceremony speech had similar themes.)

Everyone who aspires to leave their mark on the world (and hopefully that is everyone), can learn valuable lessons regarding the inseparably intertwined roles of both success and failure as we strive to achieve our goals.

- Boston Globe: [Failing Forward \(Steve Jobs's career defined as much by missteps as triumphs\)](#)
- Gizmodo: [Steve Jobs's Biggest Apple Flops](#)
- GizMag: [The business legacy of Mr. Jobs](#)
- Stanford commencement address delivered by Steve Jobs (June 12, 2005)
  - [Text](#)
  - [Video](#)

In fact, Google's [Don Dodge](#) and others suggest that failure is a *prerequisite* for business success:

- Walt Disney's first animation company [went bankrupt](#), and he endured numerous subsequent [failures](#)
- [Rovio](#) produced 51 other games before hitting it big with Angry Birds
- [Harmonix](#) had 9 failed games before succeeding with Guitar Hero
- [WD40](#) had 39 formulations which didn't work
- [Formula 409](#) had 408 formulations which didn't work
- James Dyson needed [5,127 prototypes](#) and [15 years of failure](#) to launch his vacuums (now a \$1B+ business)

So stay true to your vision / goals. Persevere through (and learn from) your failures until your “success” finally arrives.

...and as you are setting goals, keep in mind, that — per [Built to Last](#) (affiliate link), which should be required reading for leaders in every sector — you should be targeting [BHAGs](#). Here are some thoughts about how to set BHAGs ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) and [how to achieve BHAGs](#).

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Steve Jobs image: © Featureflash | Dreamstime.com



This entry was posted on Monday, September 5th, 2011 at 12:06 pm and is filed under [Innovation](#), [Leadership](#), [Success / Failure](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. Responses are currently closed, but you can [trackback](#) from your own site.

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