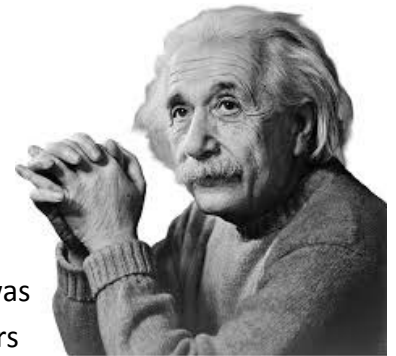


Michael Jordan

After being cut from his high school basketball team, he went home, locked himself in his room, and cried.



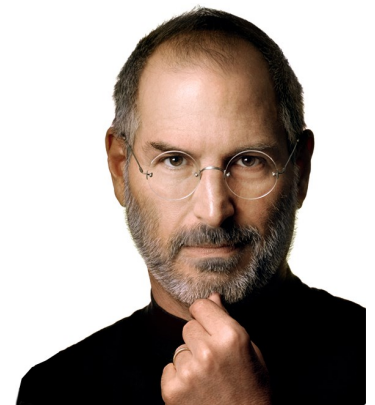
Albert Einstein

He wasn't able to speak until he was almost 4-years-old and his teachers said he would "never amount to much."



The Beatles

Rejected by Decca Recording Studios, who said "we don't like their sound—they have no future in show business."



Steve Jobs

At 30-years-old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started.



Oprah Winfrey

Was demoted from her job as a news anchor because she "wasn't fit for television."



Walt Disney

Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas."

Mishlei 24:16	משלי פרק כד:טז
For though the righteous one may fall seven times, he will arise, but the wicked ones will stumble through evil.	כי שבע יפול צדיק וקם ורשעים יקשלו ברעה:

R. Yitzchak Hutner z"l, the founding Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Chaim Berlin, in a letter to a student

A failing that many of us experience is that when we focus on the lofty level of accomplishments of great people, we only focus on how they are complete in this or in that area. At the same time, we omit mention of the inner struggles that had previously raged within them. A listener would get the impression that these individuals came out of the hand of their creator in ideal form.

Everyone is awed at the purity of speech of the Chofetz Chaim, considering it a miraculous phenomenon. But who knows of the battles, struggles and obstacles, the slumps and regression that the Chofetz Chaim encountered in his war with the yetzer hara? There are many such examples to which a discerning individual such as yourself can certainly apply the rule.

The result of this misconception is that when an ambitious young man of spirit and enthusiasm meets obstacles, falls and slumps, he imagines himself unworthy of being “planted in the house of Hashem...” (See Psalms 92:14). According to this young man's fallacy, flourishing in the house of Hashem means to repose with calm spirit on “lush meadows beside tranquil waters” (see *ibid.* 23:2), delighting in the yetzer hatov in the manner of the righteous delighting in the reflection of the Shechinah, with crowns on their heads, gathered in Gan Eden. At the same time, he should be untroubled by the agitation of the yetzer hara, along the lines of the verse, “...among the dead, who are free...” (*ibid.* 88:5-6).

Know, however, my dear friend, that your soul is rooted not in the tranquility of the yetzer tov, but rather in the battle of the yetzer tov. And your precious, warm-hearted letter “testifies as one hundred witnesses” (see Gittin 40b) that you are a worthy warrior in the battalion of the yetzer tov. The English expression, “Lose a battle and win the war,” applies to this phenomenon. Certainly, you have stumbled and will stumble again (a self-fulfilling prophecy is not intended), and in many battles you will fall lame. I promise you, however, that after those losing campaigns you will emerge from the war with laurels of victory upon your head and with the fresh prey quivering between your teeth. Lose battles but win wars. (Solomon,) the wisest of all men, has said, “A righteous man falls seven times and rises again” (Proverbs 24:16). Fools believe that the intent of this verse is to teach us something remarkable: the righteous man has fallen seven times and yet he resiliently rises. But the knowledgeable know that the source of the tsaddik's ability to rise again is precisely through his seven falls. “And he saw all that He had made and, behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). ‘Good’: that is the yetzer tov. ‘Very good’: that is the yetzer hara” (Genesis Rabbah 91).

My cherished one, I clasp on you to my heart and whisper in your ear that, had your letter reported on your mitzvos and good deeds, I would have said that I had received a good letter from you. As things stand, with your letter telling of slumps and falls and obstacles, I say that I have received a very good letter from you. Your spirit is storming as it aspires to greatness. I beg of you, do not portray for yourself great men as being one with their yetzer tov. Picture their greatness, rather, in terms of an awesome war with their yetzer hara.

When you feel the turmoil of the yetzer hara within yourself, know that by experiencing that feeling you resemble great men far more than if you were to experience the feeling of deep peace, which you desire. In those very areas—do you have the greatest potential for serving as an instrument of distinction for the honor of Hashem.

“It’s not about how hard you hit. It’s about how hard you get hit, and keep moving forward.”

- Rocky Balboa

