Your Greatest Mistake
Are You a Victim or Victor?

“Fall down seven times, get up eight.” – Japanese proverb

New Year’s “Rocky” Eve
Did you watch the famous ball of lights drop in Times Square on New Year’s Eve this past year? I was tuned to “Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve” and saw Mariah Carey’s act just 15 minutes before the clock struck midnight. It was embarrassing.

I called my wife in to see the spectacle of Mariah walking around on the stage and stumbling through remembering the words to her own songs. You could tell she was having problems with her earpiece monitor. She couldn’t hear the track to lip sync along with the song and it pretty much went downhill from there.

Like many I was quick to criticize her at first. “She is a professional and should have handled the situation better.” I thought. Like many I read the comments people made about the disastrous performance.

Marie Osmond, a person qualified to speak on entertainment and live performances, said, “I think people enjoy seeing people have problems, which is kind of sad, but it’s kind of where we are,” Osmond said on the “Access Hollywood” television show.

When you can't hear, you can't hear,” Osmond said. "I don’t care what you think. People think you can hear. You don’t know what to sing to. You don't know what pitch to sing in, and they go, ‘You know, it was lip-synched.’"

Marie went on to say, “Just so you know, most of those big shows are [lip-synched] because they don’t want a mishap, and they want to make sure that everything is right,” Osmond said to "Access Hollywood Live." “Do you know what I'm saying? … And so she was in a really bad predicament. I think she gave it her best shot, and she's gotten a lot of publicity from it… so, awesome.”
Right vs. Wrong
What she did right: Osmond said, “First of all, high-five to her for not walking offstage.” Personally, I’ve had times in presentations when the room lights went out, my microphone died, or once, the walls suddenly opened up on the side of the room and it took everyone’s attention. I made a joke out of what I couldn’t control and moved on. When I made a mistake on stage, I owned up to it.

What she did wrong: She blamed everyone but herself. Many news sources reported that Carey’s publicist blamed show producer Dick Clark Productions for not addressing technical difficulties before the performance, including the errant earpiece.

What do you do when a mistake happens? Do you play the blame game? Do you point at flaws in others or the physical environment, rather than yourself? Do you admit you are human and “fess up” as we say in the South?

Reinventing Ownership
What we do wrong: Blame others and point fingers. Usually if someone loses an election, the person who assumes the blame is the candidate themselves. You rarely heard Stephen Harper blaming the media for his loss to the Liberal Party and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Canada.

When things don’t go right your way, who do you blame? When my wife and I connected on our first date, we had known each other since high school, but our lives had taken us in different directions. Wanting to be honest with her, I said as we sat down to talk, “I’ve made a lot of mistakes in life.” I was afraid of her reaction but I didn’t want to give a false impression that I couldn’t live up to later. To my relief, she smiled and admitted that she, too, had made mistakes “because no one is perfect.”

Everyone has made mistakes and has some skeletons in their closets. As soon as you realize that you can be honest in relationships and in your business, you will attract more authentic people.

More people will do business with you if you are authentic with them.

Watch figure skaters in the Olympics who get up and continue where the music at the moment their mistakes occurred. Professionals don’t blame others for their own falls. Pick up the pieces and continue where you left off.

Bankrupt?
Life is how you perceive it. You can view almost every situation and circumstance from two angles. I played a character in a high school adaptation of Herb Gardner’s “A Thousand Clowns.” My role was Arnold Burns who had some good advice for his brother, Murray. One of my lines was, “Murray, there are people who spill things on others and people who get spilled on. I choose to ignore the stains.” In your life, you
may become a victim and spend your life complaining about being spilled on by others. At the same time, though, you may choose to ignore the stains and live as a victor.

Many people have made mistakes, failed and gone on with their lives. You can identify yourself by your failures, or by how you failed and became a success. The choice is yours to identify yourself to the world as a hapless victim or a happy victor.

*What do Mark Twain, Dave Ramsey, Dorothy Hamill, Jerry Lee Lewis, H. J. Heinz, Suze Orman, Willie Nelson, Nicholas Cage and Walt Disney have in common? They all declared bankruptcy at some point in their careers. Were you aware of their failures? Probably not. Today, some people criticize President Donald Trump for declaring bankruptcy in the past. Did you know that he is the fifth American President to do so (Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses Grant and William McKinley being the others)?

The most important speech you give is what you tell yourself about yourself each day.

You can either declare your failures and stop there, or proclaim your successes and be known for them. Look at it this way; everyone has something to be ashamed of or has been the “victim” of in life. No one you see at work or play today has a flawless past. The people you look up to the most in your family, work associates, friends or school have many flaws.

We live in a world where some flaws are forgiven easily and others are not. Go back 200 years and you will find that many things you do today were condemned then and many things we condemn today were acceptable in past times.

You can’t let the world determine your self-image. You are more than what others think of you. You choose to be known for what you can do and want to do regardless of the mistakes and failures you have made. Are you a victim or a victor?

Candy Man
Milton Hershey, founder of Hershey’s Chocolate Company and the town of Hershey, Pennsylvania, made more mistakes than successes early on in his career (he also declared bankruptcy). He never got past the 4th grade in school. At 19 he started a candy business. Was it a success? It failed. With funds from his family, he started another candy business several years later. The result was Hershey’s chocolates, right?

Again, it was a miserable failure. His family wrote him off and he declared (you guessed it) bankruptcy. Most people would find something else to do with even their family telling them they didn’t believe in them.

But Milton kept selling candy. He started selling caramels out of a cart and his business was sold several years later. That gave him the funding to make milk chocolate and found
the town of Hershey to house the factory. Today his name is synonymous with delicious chocolates and treats worldwide... and success!

You will be known for how you see yourself in other’s eyes. Facebook gives everyone an opportunity to create a profile of how they wish to be known. Some people call it “Fakebook” because of all the false images and postings. But those who accept who you are will testify about the REAL you; not the image you falsely portray, or attempt to hide.

The choice to overcome is yours.

Victim or Victor? Your greatest mistake may be a negative way you see yourself… and letting that determine the rest of your life!

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