

## *A Lesson in Chocolate*

Milton Snavely Hershey, the epitome of the American success story, knew about failure. As a boy, he went to work as a printer's apprentice. It didn't work out. Then he became an apprentice confectioner, where he fared better.

For five years, he learned his trade, and in 1876, at age 19, he moved to Philadelphia to start his own confectionary business. He worked hard for six years, but finally had to give up. He moved to Denver to work for another candy company.

Then he tried again. He and his father started a candy company in Chicago. It failed. They went to New Orleans, where another venture failed. New York was next. It was another failure.

But Hershey learned from his mistakes. He learned that failure isn't fatal. He learned that obstacles can be stepping stones. He learned that you never fail until you stop trying. Along the way, he learned many tricks of the confection trade and came up with some new ones because he was constantly experimenting with new formulas and processes.

He began anew, opening the Lancaster Caramel Company in Pennsylvania in time for the Christmas trade. It was a success. Near the end of the century, he was able to sell the company for a million dollars and embark upon his greatest adventure. Armed with money and new methods for processing milk chocolate that he had developed, he perfected the Hershey's Milk Chocolate bar and other products. In 1903, he began building a factory that became the world's largest chocolate manufacturing plant. He planned and built a town around the factory where people would be happy to live and raise their families.

In 1909, Hershey and his wife, Catherine, established the Milton Hershey School to provide a home and education for needy orphans. The Hersheys were unable to have children of their own, and in 1918, he turned over the bulk of his fortune – 99 percent of his personal wealth – to the M.S. Hershey Foundation, which supports the school.

A "failure" with little book learning, Milton Snavely Hershey became an inventor, entrepreneur, industrialist, philanthropist and humanitarian. When he died in 1945 at age 88, his name was known throughout the world.

His story should encourage and inspire us. We can learn from our mistakes and from the adversity which comes our way. Failure and obstacles can become the path to success.

--Beecher Hunter

