

What Drove Fred Astaire

Fred Astaire's name is legendary as a dancer, choreographer, singer, musician and actor, with his stage, film and television careers spanning a total of 76 years.



Named the fifth Greatest Male Star of All Time by the American Film Institute, his career included 31 musical films and several award-winning television specials as well as numerous recordings. Astaire was best known as the dancing partner of Ginger Rogers, with whom he co-starred in a series of 10 Hollywood musicals.

Many of Astaire's movies rank as classics of the silver screen. But in 1932, when he was just starting out in Hollywood, he went to a screen test to try out for a part.

After the audition, the evaluator wrote: "Can't act. Can't sing. Can dance a little."

That memo hung over the actor's fireplace in his Beverly Hills home throughout his successful career as an actor, singer and dancer.

But his story is not unusual. There is no end to the accounts of people who succeeded wildly after failing miserably – often for years. The lessons are usually similar in every case: don't give up, try harder, dig deeper, don't settle for no, and winners never quit.

There is nothing wrong with such advice, but it only addresses one level of our lives. For the Christian, failure can represent an entirely different set of realities, such as:

1. God is at work in me for His own good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).
2. God can take every event and cause it to work for good (Romans 8:28).
3. God is shaping my character to be like Christ (Romans 8:29).

If you have failed at something recently, or suffered a setback of some kind, take a second, deeper look. God is at work to accomplish what only He can.

After all, every time we fail, we eliminate one more option that is proven not to work.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes (Psalm 119:71).

– Beecher Hunter