

## A Jumping-Off Point

*“If At First You Don’t Succeed...Think Bigger”*

Many people have written about the failures and heartbreaks Abraham Lincoln sustained on his journey to becoming the president of the United States. Everything from early business failures, to betrayals by partners, to lost loves, repeated lost elections, depressions, a difficult marriage, death of children. These make for a truly compelling story of triumph over adversity. But an equally compelling lesson concerning these failures and heartbreaks is this: after each failure in business and in the political arena, Abraham Lincoln soon came back trying for something bigger. What fueled this perseverance? It was his passion for an ideal - ending slavery. Lincoln was just 22 years old when he was hired to build and to pilot a flatboat loaded with cargo down the Mississippi. During that trip, Lincoln was reported to have seen the slave auction in New Orleans and to have said: “If I ever get to hit that thing (the institution of slavery), I will hit it hard.” He was a man on a mission. He was a man who recognized that he was a leader, long before he was one. His sense of purpose and his self-awareness propelled him forward – to do whatever it took to accomplish his mission.

Most of us have an ideal or a purpose we are pursuing. It can manifest in the form of a business that brings our purpose into the world and into the marketplace. It can manifest in our writing, art, music. It can manifest in our volunteer work that serves people in areas that have a special meaning to us. No matter what our purpose, all of us will encounter failure, challenges, adversity, criticism, and losses in the pursuit of accomplishing it. If we learn from the example of Lincoln, a good way to counteract the frustration and dejection of these negative forces is to come back trying for something even bigger. Having learned this “Lincoln Principle” several years ago, I have incorporated it as one of my best antidotes to failures and disappointments.

Last summer, I had learned of an opportunity to apply to become a host of a show on an Internet Radio Station for Women. Being on radio had been on my list of goals for some time and I was excited about this possibility. There was a preliminary application procedure requiring a resume of qualifications and then several tiers of a selection process. After several emails back and forth over the course of weeks, it came down to “we have so many applicants, we will have to get back to you at a later date via email”. In that long waiting time, I mentioned to Ann, my webmaster and technology guru, my disappointment of not being able to move forward with my goal. She replied “You know you can have your own Internet Radio Station”. At the time, I think I replied something profound like “Really?” but her suggestion took root. When the email finally did arrive from the previously mentioned Internet Radio Station asking for yet another round of a selection, I decided to stop hoping to be chosen and make a choice to think bigger. The disappointment of not being chosen to be the host of one show was soon replaced by the

excitement of being the owner of my own station. Read the Great News section for the announcement regarding this choice to think bigger.

Failure, discouragement, disappointment are all part of our experiences as human beings, but thinking bigger as an antidote to them can be a jumping off point for our growth and success.

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