

**April 16, 2018**  
**By Robert J. Tamasy**

## THE UNTRIED BUT TRUE PATH TO FAILURE

Have you ever chosen not to attempt things because of fear you might fail? Maybe it was assuming greater responsibility at work, trying to change careers, or even attempting to begin an ambitious self-improvement program? I have to admit having been guilty of that several times. This is ironic, because if we decide not try to do something, there is 100 percent certainty we will not accomplish it.

Not long ago I came across a quote from an unknown source that states, "Every accomplishment starts with a decision to try." Sounds like a no-brainer, because it seems like common sense. But when we confront a challenge and determine it is not worth the effort - or the risk of failure - to attempt, we affirm this "sense" is not so common after all.

Most of us are familiar with the classic case of Thomas Edison, inventor of the incandescent light bulb, who had to make hundreds of attempts before he finally succeeded in producing an electrical light as he had imagined. Scanning the pages of history, we could find countless other examples. But my intent here is not to celebrate the successes of those to tried and persisted. Rather, it is to mourn all of those who have conceived great ideas, but failed because they were unwilling to try.

A Chinese philosopher named Mencius many centuries ago expressed it in other terms: "The difference between enthusiasm and indifference is filled with failures." My friend, Mike, comes to mind. Years ago he chose to leave a secure, well-compensated job to start a software consulting company from scratch. His "office" was in the basement of his house, his makeshift desk

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consisting of a door stretched across two file cabinets. He knew it was risky, having a small family and leaving the certainty of a steady paycheck, along with corporate benefits such as health insurance.

As bills began to mount and he was briefly hospitalized with a serious illness, Mike was tempted to give up on his dream. "What was I thinking?" he asked himself more than once. But he determined to continue pursuing his vision and found a much-needed client "just in the nick of time." Over time he and a small staff built the business into a successful international company. Mike experienced the fulfillment of realizing his entrepreneurial vision; his faith also grew greatly through in the process.

If we have a vision - or a lifetime dream - but find our resolve to pursue it wavering, what should we do? The Scriptures give us some insight:

**Place your trust in the right place.** Even the most talented and experienced people have times when their resolve is tested by adversity. However, if we believe God is leading to take a step of faith, not taking that step would be an act of disobedience. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

**Make God - and His will - your priority.** Before making any major decision, first commit the matter to God in prayer, sincerely seeking His wisdom and direction. Once we are confident of how He is leading, we can be assured He is with us in what we are trying to do. *"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun" (Psalm 37:4-5).*

© 2018. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is [www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com](http://www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com), and his biweekly blog is: [www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com](http://www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com).

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## Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Can you think of a time when you were reluctant to try something new, fearful that you would fail? If so, what was that - and is it still on your "to do someday" list?
2. How inclined are you to venture into the unknown, to try a new task, confront a new challenge, or even make a major lifestyle or career change?
3. What can we learn when attempting something we have never done before, even if it were to result in failure?
4. Do you turn to God, seeking wisdom and guidance, before making a major decision? If you do, give an example of how that has affected your decision-making process. Has that made it easier for you to try the unfamiliar or unknown, even if you have no certainty of the ultimate outcome?

## NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

*Proverbs 12:11,24; Isaiah 26:3, 41:10; Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 28:20; 1 John 4:18*

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