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Overcoming Failure

In 1923 Walt Disney filed for bankruptcy and in 1927 he invented the most famous cartoon character known still to this day, Mickey Mouse. Walt Disney went on to make hundreds of cartoons and pave the cartoon world that people know today. If Disney would have seen his bankruptcy as a failure and never pursue cartoon creating again Disney+, Cinderella, Disney World, Beauty and the Beast and so much more would not exist today. Disney pursued and worked harder after his setback in 1923.

Looking back at the times of 1923 the world was different, people were different, and they lived different lives than we do today. People listened to jazz music continuously, families would gather around the radio, and America was booming with excitement. These times could have played a role in how Walt Disney recovered from his bankruptcy or his dream of being a cartoon artist was so strong that there was nothing stopping him. Some may have looked at Disney's bankruptcy as failure, but he saw it as another opportunity. Today, people fear failure and sometimes stop working towards a dream just in case they fail. But studies show that failure is important in people's lives and learning from failure is even more important. Petroski, a historian of engineering, stated, "successes don't teach you very much, ... but failure can teach you a lot more." Youth now more than ever need to learn that perfection is impossible, but overcoming failures, or challenges is important. Noted, it is important that there is a safe space for youth to fail and overcome their challenges, but if the world does not provide them with a safe environment to fail, when they become adults, their failures will be on a larger scale, and they may not have the mental capacity to overcome them. Bright Horizons, a daycare center, states, "when children are given the opportunity to struggle and sometimes fail, you allow them to develop important social and emotional skills." A great place outside of daycare that children learn to fail and overcome is 4-H.

With endless opportunities through projects and activities that 4-H has to offer, 4-H members learn not only what their passions are, but also, they learn how to be a beginner and learn in their passion areas. 4-H provides a safe place for youth to fail and encourages youth to push beyond their comfort zones, so challenges do not look like failures, but they look like opportunities. At craft workshops, youth can paint, build, and craft their own projects with full responsibility of the final product. Along the way, oftentimes there are mistakes made, but youth learn how to work through them and sometimes they even realize by making a mistake their project turned out different, but cooler than they originally had in mind. In the livestock side of 4-H, youth spend hours working with their animals and sometimes when they get in the ring a small motion can dock them a placing in showmanship. These youth may be disappointed in the moment, but the next time they remember what they learned and don't make the same mistake again while showing.

There are plenty more examples of how 4-H members overcome challenges, but the important takeaway is that 4-H offers a safe place for challenges and failures. When youth become adults, they know how to overcome and learn from difficult situations. Now is a great time to enroll your youth to help them learn to overcome challenges and make some great memories along the way. Contact the Buffalo County Extension Office with any questions or how to get involved.

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Resources

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