

These 3 Billionaires Found Success After Being Rejected From Harvard

While receiving college rejections from a premier ivy league school may feel like the end of the world, the stories of these three billionaires, who got rejected by Harvard University, show the power of resilience and how a disaster can prove to be an opportunity in disguise.

Warren Buffett

Business mogul, Warren Buffett, applied to Harvard Business School after graduating from the University of Nebraska at 19 years old. However, during the interview stage the school's staff told Buffett "forget it, you're not going to Harvard".

He then applied to Columbia University. Alongside his written application he also wrote a letter addressed to his idols—Benjamin Graham and David Dodd—who taught at Columbia Business School.

The letter read: "Dear Professor Dodd. I thought you guys were dead, but now that I found out that you're alive and teaching at Columbia, I would really like to come". This technique worked in Buffett's favor and he was admitted. Graham later went on to become Buffett's mentor and heavily shaped the billionaire's investment approach. "A temporary defeat is not a permanent one. In the end, it can be an opportunity," he says today.

Ted Turner

"I want to be sure to make this point: I did everything I did without a college degree", says media mogul Ted Turner. The billionaire is famously known to take a lot of pride in the fact that higher education didn't facilitate his successful career.

After being rejected by Harvard and Princeton, Turner instead headed up to Rhode Island to start his undergraduate studies at Brown University. His admission didn't last long. He was eventually expelled from Brown, after which he started working for his father's company. The young Turner was forced to take over the family business after his father committed suicide—he went on to transform it into a global media empire. Brown awarded Turner an honorary BA in 1989.

Jack Ma

China's wealthiest man endured an early career full of rejection, starting when he failed his university entrance exam three times. He applied to Harvard a total of 10 times and was knocked back on every occasion. When job hunting, he applied to 30 vacancies and was turned down for all of them. When KFC visited his home city, out of 24 applicants that applied for a job 23 were hired, but not him. Ma also attempted to enter the police service but was the only one out of five candidates to be rejected, due to being "no good".

His resilience and fortitude came in handy when he took the entrepreneurship route and

founded China Pages in 1995. The idea for the business came to him during his visit to the US—he saw a gap in the market due to an absence of data on his country and set up a website with help from a friend. The website launched at 9.40am and by 12.30pm he had received five emails from interested Chinese investors. Ma built Chinese e-commerce giant, Alibaba, four years later.

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