

Refuse to Acknowledge Setbacks and Intimidations, and You Will Never Fail

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

The police pulled in behind us the second we turned into my mother's driveway, and turned on their lights. I was very frightened. I thought I might be going to jail that evening. I was not sure.

I had assumed my mother and sister were staying in for the evening when we went joyriding in her car; however, I was wrong. She had walked up the street to the ice-cream parlor with my sister. When she returned home, she assumed that the car was stolen because it was missing from the driveway. She called the police. The police caught me and I was mortified. When my mother came home, she was furious with me; the whole affair deeply shattered my self-esteem.

In contrast to me, the guy I was with did not seem to care. To the astonished police officer, he calmly said:

"There is nothing you can do with us. We are 13 years old. What are you going to do? Just call my mom so she can come pick us up and we can get this over with. Don't you have anything better to do with your time?"

He then looked over at me: "You need to calm down. Who cares if we went joyriding? I am sure this cop and your mom did the same thing when they were our age."

At the age of 13, I had been talked into going out joyriding with a guy my age who lived a few doors down from me. He was the most persuasive guy I had ever met. This particular boy is the only person I have ever known who was completely oblivious to setbacks and obstacles. Literally nothing ever got in his way. Ignoring setbacks and obstacles can take you incredibly far in your life. In fact, if you can ignore setbacks and obstacles, your life will change in profound ways.

At the age of 7, this same neighbor had gotten a pacemaker. Prior to that, his health-related problems were so severe that he spent weeks at a time in hospitals. He never grew as much as other kids did and was always much shorter than us as we grew up. Every few years, he would have to go in and have a new battery put in his pacemaker, and this would require opening up his chest. Despite his health problems and short stature, he made up for it with the strongest attitude I have ever seen from anyone—before or since.

I knew a few other kids who had bad health problems when they were growing up. They would always tell other kids all sorts of stories about these health problems and define themselves by these health problems. Many were depressed and used their poor health as an excuse for not participating in or making the most of their lives.

If you wanted to talk to the guy with the pacemaker about his health problems, he would ignore you. If you pressed him, he would get a little hostile. He did not want to acknowledge any weakness he might have had.

At the age of 12, this kid started a successful landscape business, purchased a pickup truck and a trailer, and drove around without a driver's license mowing lawns all over town. At the age of 16, he bought himself a \$20,000 sports car for cash. By the age of 18, he was rumored to have over \$300,000 in the bank from his various businesses.

When he was 13 or so, he even turned into a loan shark to younger kids. If they did not pay, he slashed the tires on their bikes and intimidated them in other ways. He loaned me \$500 to purchase a moped when I was around 14. He stopped by weekly to collect his money and interest. About six months into this deal, all I was paying him was interest. My mother grew annoyed with his constant visits:

"He has already paid you back," she told him. "Leave him alone or I'll talk to your mother," she told him.

"If you talk to my mother, I will beat him up and I will also put sugar in the gas tank of the moped and ruin it when he is not around. I would not do that if I were you..." he fired right back.

Such audacity out of a guy his age was amazing. I remember at the time seeing my mother tick off a small smile when she was confronting him. How could someone his age have the balls to confront an older person like that?

I do not think there was anyone close to our age who was not afraid of him.

I can now see that what made him so successful was a fierce and compelling and unrelenting life force. Nothing frightened him. Nothing discouraged him. Nothing got in his way.

In everything he did, he was successful. He may not have been the best athlete, but he had a reputation for trying harder than everyone else. He may not have been the best-looking guy, but he always dated the most desired girls (even when they were more than a foot taller than he). He may not have been the best student, but he worked the best he could to get good grades.

He just did not back down from anything. Ever. I do not think he knew how to back down.

When I was around 22, I heard that he had gone to college and gotten into all sorts of problems with sports bookies. He had to drop out of school due to massive gambling debts with dangerous people. He lost all his money and then some. He was beaten up, threatened with death, and forced to work seven days a week for years to pay the debts off. He eventually went back to school and now has a productive and successful life. In fact, he is now very successful again. Of course he is. His spirit is unbreakable.

This guy never cared about anyone or anything that got in his way. Literally nothing held him back. What he had was a psychology that simply did not recognize any sort of obstacles and refused to see any sort of limitations in his life. Had one of his legs been chopped off, he would have kept going and I do not think anything would have been different for him. Were he suddenly shunned by everyone, I do not think anything would be different for him.

I have known hundreds of very successful people throughout my life and [career](#), and most people can generally be intimidated, or made to back off, by someone or something. You take people out of their comfort zone, and they very quickly

start getting nervous. Nearly everyone can be intimidated. I threaten them with a lawsuit, and they may back off. I threaten them with a punishment, and they will back off. Virtually everyone can be intimidated and made to back off.

Most people throughout their lives experience a massive number of setbacks:

- They fail in various relationships.
- They lose jobs.
- They lose money.
- They experience medical problems.
- And, of course, eventually they die.

If you are honest with yourself, you have most likely experienced so many setbacks throughout your life that it would take you months to list them. Everyone has experienced innumerable setbacks in all areas of their lives: Whether you are the leader of a country or are currently in a prison, you probably have experienced an equal number of setbacks. Setbacks are just part of what happens in the course of a lifetime.

In addition to setbacks, I am confident that others intimidate you on an ongoing basis:

- You are intimidated by bosses.
- You are intimidated by companies and people you owe money to.
- You are intimidated by your co-workers.
- You are intimidated by your friends.
- You are intimidated by your own (irrational) fears about various circumstances.

Everyone is intimidated or frightened by others and will back off at some point.

The quality of your life and existence will be determined by how you deal with setbacks and intimidation by others. If you refuse to acknowledge either setbacks or intimidation, you are going to experience massive success. The whole world, as a natural phenomenon, is always working to place setbacks in your way and to intimidate you and lead you to believe one thing or another. This is the “game” of the world.

The way to win the game is to refuse to acknowledge setbacks and intimidation. This is the test of your character. How much is within you? How much can you take? You need to have an unconquerable spirit that refuses to be held back.

For someone who never knows when they are beaten, there is no such thing as failure. The world belongs to the person who gets up time and time again, keeps going when everyone else would quit, and moves forward when everyone else is retreating.

THE LESSON

Ignoring obstacles and setbacks will take you extremely far in life. The quality of your life will depend on how you deal with life's inevitable setbacks and the intimidation of others. Develop an unconquerable spirit that disregards life's setbacks, and you will experience massive success. Get up on time, and keep persisting when other people quit in order to achieve your goals.