

I Never Thought I Was a Failure

BY MICHAEL JOSEPHSON

It was six months since Mac graduated from college and he wasn't making much progress finding a job. "I want a job I can enjoy," he told his father, who managed a muffler shop. His dad responded, "Son, they call it 'work' for a reason. Get a job to make a living so you can get on with your life." Mac shot back, "I don't want to waste my life managing a muffler shop. I've got higher standards."

Obviously hurt, his father said, "Don't you think I wished for an easier or more prestigious or better paying job? But you know what? I've had to face up to the fact that I didn't have the talent to play pro hockey or be a sportswriter. And I'm no business genius. But don't tell me I wasted my life. I've given you and your two sisters a good home and college educations, I

love your mother and I'm respected in the community. Until now, it never occurred to me that I might be a failure." And he left the room.

Mac's mother was furious. "We don't begrudge your ambitions but how dare you demean another man's life? Here's our definition of success." She handed him a folded newspaper clipping of an old Ann Landers column with a poem by Betty Anderson Stanley:

"He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction."

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