**“What is an Oprah?”**

Oprah Winfrey began her life in rural Mississippi in 1954. The start of Oprah’s life was riddled with various adversities, this included experiencing a miscarriage, while also enduring many forms of abuse. Oprah was able to rise above these hardships excelling in her schooling, particularly in her speech, and debate courses. With her natural talent for communication she worked part-time reading the news for the local radio station. Possessing this skillset allowed her to receive a full scholarship to Tennessee State University. She then went on to graduate with her degree in communications and landed herself the position of co-anchor with Jerry Turner. Oprah, a young African-American girl was propelled into a sea of anchors who were primarily older Caucasian men. With this dynamic the station WJZ saw this as an opportunity to broaden their viewership. They then began the ad campaign titled “What is an Oprah?”. The public had a less than stellar reaction to the chemistry between Oprah and Jerry, and ratings began to drop.

While Oprah considers this experience her worst failure within her career, she took it as a learning opportunity and then began co-hosting a new show, People are Talking. With this program the chemistry between herself and her co-anchor Richard Sher resonated with viewers. This persisted for 5 years until Oprah began the talk show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, which marked her rise to fame and continued on for 25 years. Her continued success has enabled her to build a media empire. This includes the OWN network, O Magazine, Harpo productions, and Harpo Films. Oprah insists that people follow their passion and credits her success due to learning from her failures and her ability to continue striving.

Experiencing hardships throughout life is a universal experience, what you do with them and how you react is all your own. I found Oprah’s ability to rise above the nonsense within her journey incredibly powerful. Her determination allowed herself to carve out her own success. Moving forward within my own journey I plan to own my previous failures, and to learn, and grow from them. With this I will be able to control my own story and will be able to craft my own future success.

Stibel, J. (2014, December 5). Oprah Winfrey: A Profile in Failure. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141205173028-461078-oprah-winfrey-a-profile-in-failure>