

Application for Position as Failure

by Paul Williams

Dear Sir/ Madam

I wish to apply for the position you advertised in the *Daily Sun*. Although my expertise is in self-obliteration and self-worth (or lack of), and my work mainly in disappointment, I do have much experience in failure, which this letter will strive to illustrate.

Please find below a brief summary of my work experience.

I have been a failure since I was four years old. From the very start, I was ambitious, and set my hopes high. I wanted too much out of life and consequently came short. I wanted to be somebody and became nobody.

My early career aspirations were lofty: writer, film maker, movie star, musician. I have been a consistent failure at each: my first love was film. All through my childhood, I played out Cowboy and Indian battles in my head; I sketched out intricate plots of murder mysteries where the murderer hid behind shadows of shadows of other characters, I ran and reran in my head (complete with sound track) wild adventures in darkest Africa; I acted out scenes of survivors clawing up endless sand dunes to reach imaginary oases. I was brimming with ideas. I spent weeks and months and years making plasticine frame-by-frame animations of little space creatures on mars. I sent off proposals to Hollywood, grant proposals to Disney, samples to Tisch School of the Arts in New York. I aspired; I dreamed. I was destined to be the next Lukas, Spielberg, Goddard. It had to happen, I thought, because I believed it so strongly. It didn't.

A strong component of failure is the willingness to try again and again. It is the belief in success that gives me the edge in this regard.

At twelve, I learned to play the guitar, keyboard, drums. I was going to be the next Hendrix, Santana, Bon Jovi. Behind closed bedroom doors, I mimed my way through teenage-hood to Nirvana, eyes closed, headphones clamped to my head, in front of imaginary crowds cheering, and screaming girls wetting their pants. I made it into a school band, but at the first and last Battle of the Bands competition I played in, we came dead last.

Most of all, I wanted to be a best-selling author, a paperback writer, a Nobel Prize winner. I spent my university days writing out plot summaries, listing titles of books I would write, discussing Literature with other would-be writers in clouds of cigarette smoke. All through my twenties, I wrote novels, none of which are complete, and none of which have been published. I submitted them to over two hundred publishers. I wrote for every competition imaginable; I sliced off pieces of my soul at each attempt. Each rejection was a blow to an already over-bruised soul.

I was close once. Black Bird Publishers wanted to see my novel called *Fail!* (about a failed writer), and suggested I rewrite it. I rewrote it. Can you change the title, and the main character? Make him more...positive? Sure. And the ending more upbeat? Of course. Less of a loser? Sure, sure. Ultimately, however, they had to reject it, calling it a critical failure (I enclose the letter for your perusal in lieu of a letter of recommendation, which they would not give me).

I enclose no other letters of recommendation. Unfortunately, all those I approached did not get back to me, or those who did, couldn't remember who I was, or what I had achieved.

My experience is deep and broad and painful. For those who say 'Failure is not an option' and then fail, the caverns they carve in their own flesh are huge. Let no one say I have lived a shallow life. My wounds go deep.

As for my personal life—my relationships have been consistently dysfunctional. I fell in love many times, and never once has love been reciprocated, except on rare occasions when my partner sought to exploit me for whatever reason, or to use me for some self-aggrandizing project of her own. My first love was a girl called Denise (13), but being too tongue-tied and inept at fourteen, I watched her affection grow cold and finally shrink to nothing as she walked off with my best friend into a private sunset of their own. My nearest approximation of success—I could smell it—was when I met a model whom I courted and wooed online. She invited me to L.A. I flew on intercontinental Virgin wings, arrived with expensive bottles of wine and nervous plans of seduction and lifelong romance, but at that first meeting—she could smell failure--she informed me that a new boyfriend had somehow materialised, and that I could stay as long as I wanted as long as I didn't come anywhere near her.

Academically, I have taken the less travelled road. I rose to the ranks of graduate assistant, and then in lieu of a PhD, I took on the mantle of failed academic. I was always snubbed by sharper critics, and felt dull and slow in their presence.

Applying for jobs brought me a sea of rejection slips to rival my writing failures. Finally I was begrudgingly given a temporary position at a second rate business firm (ranked 2421 out of 2423 in Forbes Magazine) because the person they wanted to hire was unavailable and I was a temporary stand in. I was a ghost, never seen, never given an office—no one remembered my name or what I was doing there. In time the permanent position became available: I applied for it, and it was given to a young graduate with large front teeth (not that I have anything against large front teeth).

My patron saint is St Jude.

Failure, of course, is only measurable by aspiration: I wanted to be an athletic stud, a brilliant mind, a creative, famous writing personality, a movie star, someone who everyone would whisper after and say-'there he is!'- a musician of exceptional talent who pioneered a new wave of sound. As a film maker too, I could have performed artistic miracles. But... But... I have instead a resume filled with regret.

My soul has taken a battering, and if it were visible, you would see the scars, the marks of history. Like a sponge, it absorbs the poison of society, and now is officially disabled. It hobbles in wary scepticism; my optimism has been scuffed; the shape of failure shadows me everywhere: I have a perpetual psychological limp.

Would you be interested in such a person? I am large enough to continue brightly without hope, and idealistic enough to march into more pain.

I have the energy, the drive, the blackness in me to try and try again. Out of desperation. I refuse to go down in history as a nobody who did nothing.

I look forward to hearing from you, if you are interested in my application (which I know you won't be, but I'm ever hopeful...)

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

