



Is it Really Possible to Turn Rags into Riches?

Amanda Curnow | August 16th, 2018

Homelessness does not have to be a final destination for everyone. In fact, only 16% of the overall homeless population are considered chronically homeless (SAMHSA, 2014). This means that they have either been without housing for at least 12 continuous months, or have experienced 4 episodes of homelessness in 3 years. Many previously homeless citizens have been able to find housing and develop successful careers. Learning about others' tales of conquering their struggles can inspire a new group to do the same.

Steve Jobs, a man whose net worth was estimated to be \$10 billion at his death, was once homeless (Dodds, 2017). Before founding the iconic tech company Apple in 1975, Jobs was a college dropout who slept on the floors of his friends' dorm rooms (Kvesic, 2011). He was a truly self-made billionaire who built up his empire from the literal ground. He made money for food by returning coke bottles he found on the street. He also walked 7 miles to a temple for a free meal every week (Kvesic, 2011). Jobs was given the prestigious opportunity to speak at Stanford's 2005 Commencement, where he advised students, "you cannot connect the dots looking forward, you can only connect them looking

backwards” (Kvesic, 2011). Basically, it may seem like there is no way out of a difficult situation while you’re living it. However, once you begin to flourish, you realize that your struggles were what pushed you to find success.

Several celebrities have also documented the times they were homeless. Academy Award winner Halle Berry, for example, had no choice but to stay in a Chicago homeless shelter while she waited for her big acting break (Wenn, 2015). She has since starred in several popular movies and TV shows. Actor Chris Pratt lived in his van while waiting tables in Maui. He actually served and met the director of his debut movie while working his job at Bubba Gump Shrimp Company (Bacle, 2014). Today, he is best known for his leading roles in the Guardians of the Galaxy and Jurassic World franchises. Comedian Steve Harvey spent his early stand-up days eating bologna sandwiches, sleeping in his car, and washing up in rest-stop bathrooms. He was living on just \$50 a week until he was offered a gig at the Apollo Theater (Strohm, 2016). In 2018, Harvey is the host of his own self-titled talk show and two game shows. Halle Berry, Chris Pratt, and Steve Harvey have so much more in common than simply being homeless people who got lucky. They are all talented, passionate individuals who continued to fight to pursue their dreams despite the obstacles they faced.

Obviously, the primary goal for many homeless people isn’t to become rich and famous. The majority only wish to find a job with a livable wage and a safe place to call home. I hope that these stories of homeless people who were able to achieve their dreams can inspire those who are struggling on the streets today. Just being aware that success is possible could be enough to push someone to find helpful resources or start job hunting. If they take it one step at a time, they can be on their way to achieving their goal and putting an end to their homelessness once and for all. Do you or someone you know have an inspiring story about overcoming homelessness? Please visit T's 4 Hope's new forum "yourVOICE" to share your stories with others. <https://www.ts4hope.com/forum>

References

Bacle, A. (2014). Chris Pratt shares photo from his homeless days in Hawaii. Retrieved from <https://www.ew.com/article/2014/08/17/chris-pratt-van-photo/>

Dodds, C. (2017, November 14). Steve Jobs: Net Worth. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/university/steve-jobs-biography/steve-jobs-net-worth.asp>

Kvesic, I. (2011, October 08). Steve Jobs: From Homeless Drop-Out to Innovative Millionaire. Retrieved from <https://www.christianpost.com/news/steve-jobs-from-homeless-drop-out-to-innovative-millionaire-57562/>

SAMHSA. (2014, June 20). Homelessness and Housing. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-housing>

Stroh, E. (2016). Living Out of His Car and Surviving on Bologna Sandwiches: Inside Steve Harvey's Struggle with Homelessness as He Tried to Make It as a Comedian. Retrieved from <https://people.com/tv/inside-steve-harveys-struggle-with-homelessness/>

Wenn, A. (2015, May 14). Halle Lived In Homeless Shelter. Retrieved from http://www.contactmusic.com/halle-berry/news/halle-lived-in-homeless-shelter_1025019