

# A MESSAGE FROM BOB GALE

(CREATOR AND WRITER OF **BACK TO THE FUTURE**)



## SOME THOUGHTS ON ‘FAILURE BEFORE SUCCESS’

Whenever I’m asked to talk about **BACK TO THE FUTURE**, this is where I start:

The original movie was released in 1985 and was a gigantic hit worldwide. In America, it played in cinemas for nine months. We made two sequels, released in 1989 and 1990, and all told, corrected for inflation, the three films grossed the equivalent of two billion US dollars (over 1.5 billion UK pounds and over three billion Australian dollars).

I came up with the idea in Summer 1980. Director Robert Zemeckis and I wrote two drafts, but during the following two years, the project was rejected by every studio, production company and producer over 40 times. We finally got it off the ground in 1984 after Zemeckis made his first hit movie, *Romancing The Stone*.

Rejection can be brutal. And painful. Every person on the planet has been rejected and has failed at some point – often, many, many times – and it never ends. In sports, this is obvious. No footballer scores a goal in every attempt – not even close – just as no goalkeeper has a 100% success rate. Failure is part of the game. Thomas Edison, who invented the light bulb, tested over 10,000 filaments before he found one that worked. 10,000! He famously said:

“I HAVE NOT FAILED 10,000 TIMES. I’VE SUCCESSFULLY FOUND 10,000 WAYS THAT WILL NOT WORK.”

**THOMAS EDISON**

We all face rejection, constantly, in big things and little things. We get rejected by someone we really want to go out with. Or we don’t get invited to a party – that’s rejection. We get rejected by a club we want to join or by a school we want to attend or for a job we want to get. It hurts. Rejection hurts. Failure hurts. Even now, I still get rejected and I still fail. It’s part of life. And learning how to deal with it, learning how to push through it, finding the strength to get up when you’re knocked down...that’s one of the themes of **BACK TO THE FUTURE**.

If you take nothing else from this study experience, it’s that you should understand that EVERYBODY gets rejected sometimes, everybody fails sometimes. It hurts, but we can all help one another deal with that pain, just by showing a little kindness to somebody in that situation, just as you would appreciate that from somebody else, just as our characters do in **BACK TO THE FUTURE**, and to see it as an opportunity to learn and to do better.