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A lesson from the superstar

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Don't get bogged down by your past failures, believes Rajinikanth. So should we

After a recent performance of a stage play, that I was part of as cast, a review appeared the morning after the first performance. In the review, all characters that had appeared on stage were complimented; however I was not mentioned at all. This disappointed me and I went to the auditorium for the next performance feeling sad and despondent. A colleague of mine enquired after my sullen mood and recounted a story that instantly revived me.



The famous South Indian, more particularly Tamil, matinee idol Rajinikanth had just completed his famous film on a saint who he worshipped, called 'Baba'. The film had failed at the box office, and he was being pestered by film distributors to return sums of money—large amounts, that they had paid for the rights of the film.

During the confusion that was engaging Rajinikanth's attention, the Tamil film director P Vasu approached Rajinikanth to agree to do an action film on the subject of a possessed woman called 'Chandramukhi'.

Several well-wishers asked Rajinikanth to desist from accepting the offer, and in fact told Rajinikanth that he must stop acting, for he was past his prime.

Rajinikanth did not yield to this suggestion, and in fact, signed to do the film. The film was released, backed completely by the family of the erstwhile thespian Sivaji Ganesan, and after some initial hiccups in terms of distributors being cagey, went on to become a blockbuster.

A press reporter, who had also seen the film, interviewed Rajinikanth after the film received rave reviews and asked him where he had got the courage to do this film when his previous film was a failure. Rajinikanth is purported to have said 'if you allow a past failure to obstruct you, you will never know what it is to rise'. 'You must', he seems to have said, 'shake off the mantle of fear, like you are discarding an old robe, and put on a fresh one. All of us fall, so staying down is not the point, getting up is'.

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