



SOICHIRO HONDA **& THE POWER OF DREAMS**

Soichiro Honda said that 99% of success is failure. It says a lot about what he endured before achieving success. There were no easy paths to the founder of the seventh-largest automobile company in the world.

If he had a weaker character, Soichiro would have given up after his initial setbacks. He persevered and became a legend in the car manufacturing industry. Honda lived his company's motto by believing in the power of dreams and using it to overcome the odds against him.

Soichiro's father was a bicycle repair shop owner and blacksmith. The boy fell in love with mechanics as soon as the elder Honda introduced it.

In his spare time, the youthful Honda tinkered with broken bicycles. Soichiro used scrap metal to invent his toys after sharpening agricultural blades. His father referred to him as a "black nose weasel" because his face had stains of oil or grease throughout the day.

By 12, Soichiro had constructed a model bicycle with foot brakes. Even though he had no formal schooling, Soichiro moved to Tokyo at age 15 to seek employment. A business owner named Kashiwabara employed him as a janitor in his Art Shokai Workshop.

Despite this setback, Soichiro devoted his after-work hours to learning about engines. Instead of resting, he read books on motors in the local library. The young Honda observed how auto mechanics repaired and reconditioned vehicles.

As he gained more engine know-how, he awaited an opportunity to demonstrate his skill. This chance arose when a customer brought a unique 1908 Ford Model T to Art Shokai. He claimed that no Tokyo repair shop could fix its engine, and Kashiwabara's shop was his last resort. Soichiro volunteered to fix the vehicle and restored the engine. The notable feat compelled Kashiwabara to promote him to auto repair shop manager.

At 22, he became known as a master mechanic who could fix automobiles that other shops could not. But he left the car repair business after six years because he had a grander ambition.

Soichiro returned to his hometown in 1928 and established his own manufacturing company.

In 1935, he focused on designing and producing piston rings for small engines. Soichiro pawned his wife's jewelry to fund this entrepreneurial endeavor.

He approached several automotive manufacturers, including Toyota, to sell his fabricated piston rings.



Unfortunately, Toyota rejected his piston rings, and executives even mocked his work. He overcame his disappointment and enrolled in the College of Hamamatsu.

Then, a sequence of terrible events tested his determination. His college expelled him after two years of studies, and his piston ring factory burned down. He lost everything.

Soichiro resolved to start again and urged his colleagues to move forward. They reconstructed the plant using leftover American tin cans. After rebuilding his firm, an earthquake destroyed everything that they rebuilt.

Soichiro continued to seek opportunities with an innovative mindset despite the setbacks. Japan faced a transportation problem due to a petroleum shortage. Residents traveled either by foot or bicycle.

Honda developed an excellent business concept. He reached out to thousands of bicycle store owners with an offer. Honda proposed attaching his little engines to bicycles to increase their mobility. Five thousand bicycle owners responded and joined him in partnership.

Over the next several years, Soichiro converted thousands of bicycles into motorized vehicles. The redesigned engine-powered bicycles evolved into what is now known as Honda's Super Cab. The game-changing motorbike put Honda on the industrial map.



In 1948, following this accomplishment, Soichiro established the Honda Motor Company. And the rest—as they say—is history.

The Honda Motor Company has grown into a multibillion-dollar conglomerate. It employs more than 100,000 workers globally. The company evolved from a motorized bicycle manufacturer into a world-class manufacturer of jet planes, AI technology, robots, vehicles, and engines.

Since 1999, Honda Cars has sold at least one million vehicles each year. Remember the words of Honda's founder the next time you see or ride in a Honda vehicle: Ninety-nine percent of success is failure.

Soichiro was the first Japanese inducted into the Automobile Hall of Fame. The youngster who tinkered with worn-out bicycles believed in the power of dreams. Soichiro Honda died of liver failure in a Tokyo hospital on August 5, 1991.

Lessons from the life of Soichiro Honda:

Do your best in doing what you love. Your competence, talent, and skill will create opportunities. By doing what you love, you excel in your field.

Don't get intimidated by giants. Biased experts will hamper you. Embrace rejections and learn from constructive feedback. Continue until you discover your core while you master your craft.

Digest your failures. Yes, everybody fails. Honda did. Digest failures and strengthen your character as you rise from them. Lessons learned from failure prepare you for success.

