

My name is Abdullah Talal and I am a student at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan. When I failed my final year of high school, I was very angry with myself. In one year, I had managed to throw away years of diligent study and work. I felt like I had lost my one and only chance—like I had single-handedly sabotaged my own dreams at success.

When I first entered the work force, I was 10 years old. My family had been facing financial problems, and we were in desperate need of another source of income. As the eldest, I was expected to take on this responsibility, which, after being raised for years to take of my two younger siblings, emerged almost as a natural course of action to me. Despite the difficulties of juggling my work alongside my familial responsibilities, I did not leave my studies. Contrary to what had been expected of me, I excelled in all of my classes, particularly mathematics, which I enjoyed as it was the closest to my passion, engineering.



I worked as an auto mechanic with one of my uncles and as a carpenter with another uncle. As I grew older and my studies became harder to manage, I decided to work in a restaurant as a dishwasher as I felt it would be less hectic. Over time, I began to understand the purpose of my existence in this world. I needed to formulate a road map to my own success. I reached the final stage of my school education: General Secondary Education Certificate “Tawjihi.” Up until then, my path to success had been straight; however, soon, I began facing some problems that severely impacted my mentality. Throughout the years, the problems accumulated more and more, leading to my first setback.

I failed nine of my courses.

I decided to isolate myself from everything and everyone. Nonetheless, I did not give up on my job or my studies. According to a law of the Ministry of Education issued in 2014 regarding the Tawjihi program, I had one last opportunity to repeat the exam. With determination, diligence, hard work, and the grace of God, I passed the exam. Furthermore, in another fortunate turn of events, I got promoted to manager at my job.

However, ultimately, my grade in high school was insufficient to get into the engineering program at university, so I was forced to enroll at a college to get a diploma in the field. In order to transfer to a university program, I needed to do a comprehensive exam, which I could only manage after a year and a half of study. I struggled a lot during that time, having to work until one o’clock at night and later attend my classes at six o’clock in the morning. Eventually, however, I reached the point where I could take the assessment. For the comprehensive exam, you are required to complete the study of 28 subjects within a month, and so I had to leave my job during this period in order to study for sixteen hours on a daily basis. While the odds seemed to be stacked against

me, I still hoped to earn one of the highest grades in the kingdom, and after an intense period of effortful study, I excelled in the exam. The Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan was my first option due to its reputation, specialties, and the distinguished teaching and services that it offers to its students. In the end, I bridged my own path to university and I now have an excellent GPA in the civil engineering program.

