

## DAWN O'PORTER



# “What failure taught me”

**T**here are some things in life that you can't control, like the way humidity affects your hair, for example.

But your success and where you get to in life, you can. No matter how hard that feels sometimes.

I know this because a few years ago I thought my career was over. I was broke, broken and pathetic. Let me set the scene.

I was raised on the small island of Guernsey. Although wonderful in many ways, it was hardly the epicentre of the world's media

activity. And I knew from an early age that I wanted to be on the world's stage. To achieve this dream I needed to get off my island, so as soon as I had finished school, I auditioned for drama schools all over the UK and got into LIPA in Liverpool. I acted for three years, and hated it. Acting didn't make me happy like it was supposed to. But that burning desire to be a somebody was still there.

So I had to abandon my original ambitions and work out what I really wanted to do. I wanted

success. I needed to have a voice. A voice that I wrote, not one that was written for me. I needed to create. So in my own time I worked on book ideas and blog posts, and by day I worked in TV production as a researcher. Working hard and being keen got me noticed and awarded me my first job on TV – a producer I had worked with said he had a hidden-camera comedy show that needed someone 'brave' and he thought I would be perfect.

The next thing I knew, I had a deal for my first book, *Diaries Of An Internet Lover* (that work I did in my own time paid off) and a TV documentary series called *Dawn...* on the BBC, for which I had the freedom to make my own ideas. I was 26. I'd pinch myself remembering that wide-eyed teenager on Guernsey dreaming of success, and there I was, 'making it'. Then I got a call from Hollywood. A producer who loved my work wanted me to move to LA to make a TV series there. I moved to America two weeks later. We ►

## HEY, LADY

I recently wanted to get my husband something to say congrats for doing well in a new role. I knew artist Rose Popay from our wedding, as she did a funny drawing of our day. So I asked her to do a picture that included loads of funny little moments from our few months in New York while he did the job. Chris loved it. I highly recommend her for any occasion. Here is her one of Glastonbury that I love. [rosepopay.co.uk](http://rosepopay.co.uk)



◀ made the series, it did well, and then out of nowhere, like a tablecloth being ripped out from under me, the work just stopped. The second series I'd been promised evaporated, and apparently my 'brand' of TV was over. I couldn't understand what had happened.

**S**o I was skint, in a country where my visa restricted everything I did, and the UK was quickly forgetting who I was. I met my now husband, who moved in and paid my rent, but at that time in my life my career was still number one, and being 'kept' didn't make me happy at all. I missed my sense of self-worth, I missed my self-esteem.

I had to take jobs for money, like advertising bum wipes and being 'the face' of British potatoes (you couldn't make it up). Sure, this got me back on track financially, but they were hardly epic career moves. My self-esteem was still nowhere to be seen.

My rock bottom involved a few sessions with a therapist who said, "Why do you think you're so incapable of doing what you've done before?" And that helped me realise that I hadn't lost my skill, I'd lost my guts. This realisation saw me go back to the beginning. I started to create again. I wrote a treatment for a novel and started pitching more articles

## I'm LOVING

I never thought I would say this: I love shopping for clothes that aren't even for me. I've set up my own vintage business, where I sell vintage clothes that I source all over the world. I suspected that I might keep every single item for myself. But I'm finding spreading my vintage love totally thrilling. Check out the collection at [bobbydop.com](http://bobbydop.com) and Instagram me your finds.



## Auntie Twit

Dawn solves your problems (well, sort of) in 140 characters



**@hotpatooties** What's the best way to get over a difficult break up when you've been cheated on and dumped for someone else?

**@HayleyM923**

I know this is easier said than done, but if he cheated on you try to be happy he isn't your problem any more. Chances are he'll do it to her too.

**@hotpatooties**

Facebook reveals some of my friends have beliefs/ideas diametrically opposed to my own. Have it out with them, or seethe in silence? **@spittingyarn** You don't have to believe in the same thing to be friends but if they're racist, homophobic or anything else damaging to society tell them what's what then UNFRIEND.

**@hotpatooties** I'm wedding planning, should we keep our families happy or do what we want to do & risk unhappy guests?

**@JadeLou\_P** I kept my family out of my wedding plans because I wanted it to be all about me and Chris. Some didn't love it, but on the day, no one cares. Do it your way.

## In the NEWS

Literally my worst nightmare in the entire world is being covered in buzzy insects that sting. So when I read about Bee Beard competitions, I nearly had a heart attack.



The winner wins money for charity and gets to dance on a stage with their bee beard. Yup. Look, I'm all for charity but I'd pick a good, old-fashioned cake sale over that any day.

to British magazines and newspapers. Before long I had a two-book deal and a monthly column here in GLAMOUR. The TV work picked up again too.

What happened to me was simple: I was rejected and I took it way too personally. I took a couple of blows and wallowed for years. I gave up trying, expecting life to come to me, rather than grabbing it. I let myself feel insignificant and forgot to tell myself I was capable of anything.

The point of this tale is that you are in control of your success. When I used to say I wanted to 'make it big', people would scoff at my chances. And here I am with a successful writing and TV career, living in LA, with my own fashion line. So screw them. I've learnt you don't have to stick to your original plan to be successful, but more importantly, it doesn't have to be dictated by others. When someone knocks you down, you pick yourself up and carry on. You don't lie on the ground for three years acting like you've got a broken leg, when all you did was stub your toe. If you don't keep driving yourself forward, it will be bum wipes and potatoes for you too. ☺

What do you reckon? Tweet me @hotpatooties #GlamourMagUK

*Love Dawn*

Portrait by Matthew Eades. Make-up: Aimee Adams at Sixty One Productions. Hair: Tim Pateman at Platinum Artists. Nails: Sophie Harris Greenslade at Emma Davies Agency. Dress from a selection [williamvintage.com](http://williamvintage.com). Photographs: Rex. Features