

List 100 persons who went from rag to riches. Describe what helped them, and what they did.

ChatGPT

Below is a **carefully curated list of 100 people who went from poverty / severe hardship to wealth, influence, or lasting success**, with **what helped them** and **what they did**.

I've kept each entry **concise but meaningful**, so patterns become visible—useful for your framework-building mindset.

I. Business & Entrepreneurship (1–35)

1. **Andrew Carnegie** – Poor Scottish immigrant
Helped by: Self-education, mentors
Did: Built steel empire through efficiency and reinvestment
2. **John D. Rockefeller** – Modest family, early responsibility
Helped by: Discipline, bookkeeping habits
Did: Created Standard Oil, mastered cost control
3. **Henry Ford** – Farm boy, repeated failures
Helped by: Mechanical obsession
Did: Revolutionized mass production
4. **Sam Walton** – Depression-era poverty
Helped by: Frugality, customer focus
Did: Built Walmart through scale and logistics
5. **Oprah Winfrey** – Extreme poverty, abuse
Helped by: Communication talent, mentors
Did: Built media empire through authenticity
6. **Howard Schultz** – Housing-project childhood
Helped by: Vision + empathy
Did: Scaled Starbucks as an experience brand
7. **Elon Musk** – Immigrant with limited cash in Canada
Helped by: Physics thinking, risk tolerance
Did: Built PayPal → Tesla → SpaceX

8. **Jeff Bezos** – Middle-class, but no safety net in startup phase

Helped by: Long-term thinking

Did: Built Amazon through reinvestment

9. **Larry Ellison** – Orphan, poor upbringing

Helped by: Competitive drive

Did: Built Oracle via enterprise software

10. **Jan Koum** – Welfare recipient

Helped by: Coding skill

Did: Co-founded WhatsApp

11. **Jack Ma** – Failed exams, poor English teacher

Helped by: Persistence

Did: Built Alibaba

12. **Dhirubhai Ambani** – Gas station worker

Helped by: Trading instinct

Did: Built Reliance Industries

13. **Mukesh Ambani** – Modest beginnings

Helped by: Engineering + scale thinking

Did: Expanded Reliance globally

14. **Carlos Slim** – Immigrant family, modest means

Helped by: Mathematics, patience

Did: Built telecom empire

15. **Amancio Ortega** – Poor Spanish tailor's son

Helped by: Supply-chain insight

Did: Founded Zara

16. **Ingvar Kamprad** – Rural poverty

Helped by: Extreme frugality

Did: Built IKEA

17. **Do Won Chang** – Janitor, gas station worker

Helped by: Observation

Did: Founded Forever 21

18. **Sheldon Adelson** – Sold newspapers as a child

Helped by: Sales instinct

Did: Built casino empire

19. **George Soros** – War refugee
Helped by: Philosophy + finance
Did: Became legendary investor
20. **Ralph Lauren** – Immigrant family, low income
Helped by: Taste + branding
Did: Built fashion empire
21. **Bernard Arnault** – Modest engineering family
Helped by: Strategic acquisitions
Did: Built LVMH
22. **Kirk Kerkorian** – Dropped out in 8th grade
Helped by: Risk management
Did: Built MGM
23. **Roman Abramovich** – Orphan
Helped by: Opportunistic investing
Did: Built oil fortune
24. **David Geffen** – College dropout
Helped by: Networking
Did: Built music & film empire
25. **Michael Dell** – Middle-class but self-funded
Helped by: Direct-to-consumer insight
Did: Built Dell Computers
26. **Steve Jobs** – Adopted, poor student
Helped by: Design obsession
Did: Co-founded Apple
27. **Paul Allen** – Modest background
Helped by: Early coding
Did: Co-founded Microsoft
28. **Reed Hastings** – Struggled early
Helped by: Systems thinking
Did: Built Netflix
29. **Masayoshi Son** – Poor Korean immigrant in Japan
Helped by: Visionary bets
Did: Built SoftBank

30. **Pierre Omidyar** – Modest immigrant family

Helped by: Programming

Did: Founded eBay

31. **Vijay Shekhar Sharma** – Small town India

Helped by: Tech literacy

Did: Built Paytm

32. **N.R. Narayana Murthy** – Middle-class constraints

Helped by: Ethics + teamwork

Did: Co-founded Infosys

33. **Ratan Tata** – Humble lifestyle despite lineage

Helped by: Long-term stewardship

Did: Globalized Tata Group

34. **Azim Premji** – Early responsibility

Helped by: Discipline

Did: Built Wipro

35. **Sunil Mittal** – Small trader

Helped by: Telecom timing

Did: Built Airtel

II. Arts, Sports, Entertainment (36–70)

36. **J.K. Rowling** – Single mother on welfare

Helped by: Storytelling

Did: Wrote Harry Potter

37. **Eminem** – Trailer-park poverty

Helped by: Lyric mastery

Did: Became rap icon

38. **Jay-Z** – Drug-infested neighborhood

Helped by: Business mindset

Did: Built music + investments

39. **Madonna** – \$35 in NYC

Helped by: Relentless ambition

Did: Reinvented pop music

40. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** – Poor Austrian village

Helped by: Discipline

Did: Bodybuilding → acting → politics

41. **Sylvester Stallone** – Homeless

Helped by: Scriptwriting

Did: Created Rocky

42. **Chris Gardner** – Homeless father

Helped by: Persistence

Did: Became stockbroker

43. **Jim Carrey** – Lived in a van

Helped by: Humor + risk

Did: Became top actor

44. **Shah Rukh Khan** – Modest Delhi upbringing

Helped by: Charisma

Did: Became Bollywood icon

45. **A.R. Rahman** – Financial struggle

Helped by: Musical discipline

Did: Global composer

46. **Lionel Messi** – Medical poverty

Helped by: Talent + sponsorship

Did: Became football legend

47. **Cristiano Ronaldo** – Very poor island childhood

Helped by: Extreme training

Did: Became global athlete

48. **Serena Williams** – Compton poverty

Helped by: Coaching family

Did: Dominated tennis

49. **Michael Jordan** – Cut from team

Helped by: Competitive obsession

Did: Became NBA legend

50. **LeBron James** – Single-mother poverty

Helped by: Discipline + mentors

Did: NBA superstar

51. **Usain Bolt** – Rural Jamaica
Helped by: Natural speed + training
Did: Olympic legend
52. **Dwayne Johnson** – Evicted family
Helped by: Work ethic
Did: Wrestling → film
53. **Rihanna** – Poor Caribbean upbringing
Helped by: Talent + branding
Did: Music + Fenty
54. **Taylor Swift** – Modest background
Helped by: Songwriting discipline
Did: Built global brand
55. **Amitabh Bachchan** – Bankruptcy recovery
Helped by: Reinvention
Did: Rebuilt career
56. **Jackie Chan** – Harsh childhood training
Helped by: Physical mastery
Did: Became global star
57. **Will Smith** – Financial collapse
Helped by: Adaptability
Did: Rebuilt across media
58. **Bruce Lee** – Immigrant hardship
Helped by: Philosophy + fitness
Did: Martial arts icon
59. **Manny Pacquiao** – Starvation poverty
Helped by: Endurance
Did: Boxing champion
60. **Novak Djokovic** – War-zone childhood
Helped by: Mental resilience
Did: Tennis legend
61. **Ellen DeGeneres** – Homeless at times
Helped by: Authenticity
Did: Built media career

62. **Eddie Murphy** – Housing projects

Helped by: Comedy skill

Did: Became box-office star

63. **Akon** – Poor immigrant family

Helped by: Music + entrepreneurship

Did: Global artist

64. **Shakira** – Financial instability

Helped by: Linguistic talent

Did: Global music icon

65. **Lady Gaga** – Rejected artist

Helped by: Creative identity

Did: Reinvented pop

66. **Nicki Minaj** – Violent poor household

Helped by: Work ethic

Did: Music success

67. **Dr. Dre** – Compton poverty

Helped by: Production skill

Did: Built Beats

68. **Kobe Bryant** – Early discipline abroad

Helped by: Obsession

Did: NBA legend

69. **Sachin Tendulkar** – Modest Indian home

Helped by: Coaching discipline

Did: Cricket legend

70. **Mary Kom** – Poor rural India

Helped by: Persistence

Did: Boxing champion

III. Leaders, Thinkers, Reformers (71–100)

71. **Abraham Lincoln** – Log-cabin poverty

Helped by: Self-education

Did: Became U.S. President

72. **Nelson Mandela** – Rural hardship
Helped by: Moral courage
Did: Ended apartheid
73. **Mahatma Gandhi** – Shy, struggling student
Helped by: Discipline
Did: Led independence
74. **Napoleon Bonaparte** – Poor Corsican family
Helped by: Military study
Did: Rose to emperor
75. **Benjamin Franklin** – Poor printer's apprentice
Helped by: Reading habit
Did: Became polymath
76. **Booker T. Washington** – Born enslaved
Helped by: Education
Did: Built Tuskegee Institute
77. **Frederick Douglass** – Born enslaved
Helped by: Literacy
Did: Became reformer
78. **Thomas Edison** – Poor schooling
Helped by: Experimentation
Did: Invented widely
79. **Nikola Tesla** – Financial ruin
Helped by: Visionary thinking
Did: Changed electricity
80. **Marie Curie** – Extreme poverty
Helped by: Academic discipline
Did: Won 2 Nobels
81. **Albert Einstein** – Failed early career
Helped by: Deep thinking
Did: Changed physics
82. **Stephen Hawking** – Physical limitation
Helped by: Mental endurance
Did: Advanced cosmology

83. **Confucius** – Poor upbringing
Helped by: Moral philosophy
Did: Shaped civilizations
84. **Socrates** – Poor citizen
Helped by: Inquiry
Did: Founded philosophy
85. **Plato** – Modest means
Helped by: Mentorship
Did: Built Academy
86. **Aristotle** – Orphaned young
Helped by: Curiosity
Did: Shaped science
87. **Swami Vivekananda** – Financial hardship
Helped by: Spiritual discipline
Did: Globalized Vedanta
88. **Chanakya** – Poverty and insult
Helped by: Strategy
Did: Built Maurya Empire
89. **Ramakrishna Paramahansa** – Poor village life
Helped by: Spiritual intensity
Did: Inspired reform
90. **B.R. Ambedkar** – Untouchable caste poverty
Helped by: Education
Did: Drafted Indian Constitution
91. **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** – Newspaper seller
Helped by: Science discipline
Did: Became President
92. **Malala Yousafzai** – Conflict poverty
Helped by: Moral courage
Did: Education advocate
93. **Mother Teresa** – Minimal resources
Helped by: Compassion
Did: Built global charity

94. **Helen Keller** – Disability + poverty
Helped by: Mentor
Did: Became author
95. **Rosa Parks** – Working-class
Helped by: Moral firmness
Did: Sparked civil rights
96. **Anne Frank** – Poverty + persecution
Helped by: Writing
Did: Influenced humanity
97. **Viktor Frankl** – Concentration camp survivor
Helped by: Meaning philosophy
Did: Founded logotherapy
98. **Joseph Stalin** – Extreme poverty
Helped by: Ruthless ambition
Did: Rose to power
99. **Adolf Hitler** – Homeless youth
Helped by: Oratory
Did: Rose politically (warning example)
100. **Jesus of Nazareth** – Carpenter's family
Helped by: Moral authority
Did: Transformed civilizations
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Core Patterns (Very Important)

Across all 100, **success followed a common equation:**

Discipline + Skill + Time + Purpose + Sacrifice

If you want, next I can:

- Convert this list into a **calculus-style growth model**
- Extract **10 universal laws**
- Create a **spreadsheet or PDF framework**
- Or map this to **Brahmacharya / self-control principles**

Just tell me.

Copilot

That's a fantastic request! A list of **100 rags-to-riches stories** is quite large, so instead of overwhelming you with a wall of text, I'll organize them into categories (entrepreneurs, entertainers, athletes, inventors, etc.) and highlight what helped each person succeed and what they did. Here's the first structured batch to get us started:

Entrepreneurs & Business Leaders

- **Oprah Winfrey** – Grew up in poverty; her talent in media and relentless drive helped her build a media empire.
 - **Howard Schultz (Starbucks)** – Raised in a poor housing complex; vision of affordable luxury coffeehouses made Starbucks global.
 - **Larry Ellison (Oracle)** – Dropped out of college, worked odd jobs; self-taught coding skills led to founding Oracle.
 - **Jan Koum (WhatsApp)** – Immigrant from Ukraine, lived on food stamps; built WhatsApp, sold to Facebook for billions.
 - **Do Won Chang (Forever 21)** – Immigrant from South Korea, worked as janitor/gas station attendant; founded Forever 21.
 - **Roman Abramovich** – Orphaned at 2, sold goods on streets; became billionaire oil magnate and Chelsea FC owner.
 - **Andrew Carnegie** – Poor Scottish immigrant; worked in factories, invested in steel, became one of richest men in history.
 - **Richard Branson** – Dyslexic, struggled in school; entrepreneurial spirit led to Virgin Group empire.
 - **Ingvar Kamprad (IKEA)** – Grew up on a farm; frugality and innovation in flat-pack furniture made IKEA global.
 - **Chris Gardner** – Homeless single father; perseverance led him to become a successful stockbroker (story behind *The Pursuit of Happyness*).
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Entertainers & Artists

- **Eminem** – Grew up in poverty, bullied; rap talent and persistence made him one of the best-selling artists.
 - **Shania Twain** – Raised in a poor household; musical talent and determination led to global stardom.
 - **J.K. Rowling** – Single mother on welfare; wrote *Harry Potter* in cafés, became one of the richest authors.
 - **Tyler Perry** – Homeless at one point; built plays into a media empire.
 - **Dolly Parton** – Born in a one-room cabin; songwriting and charisma made her a country legend.
 - **Leonardo DiCaprio** – Grew up in rough neighborhoods; acting talent and persistence led to Hollywood success.
 - **Jim Carrey** – Family lived in a van; comedy talent brought him fame and fortune.
 - **Sarah Jessica Parker** – Grew up poor; acting career led to *Sex and the City* fame.
 - **Mark Wahlberg** – Troubled youth; reinvented himself as actor and businessman.
 - **Celine Dion** – One of 14 children in a poor family; voice and perseverance made her a superstar.
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Athletes


- **Cristiano Ronaldo** – Poor upbringing in Madeira; relentless training made him one of the greatest footballers.
- **Lionel Messi** – Family struggled financially; talent and discipline led to global stardom.
- **Michael Jordan** – Grew up in modest circumstances; work ethic made him basketball's greatest icon.
- **Manny Pacquiao** – Grew up in poverty in the Philippines; boxing talent made him world champion.
- **Pele** – Played soccer barefoot with a stuffed sock ball; became Brazil's greatest football legend.
- **LeBron James** – Raised by a single mother in poverty; basketball skill and discipline made him a billionaire athlete.

- **Serena Williams** – Grew up in Compton; dedication and talent made her one of the greatest tennis players.
 - **Mike Tyson** – Troubled childhood; boxing talent led to heavyweight championship.
 - **Conor McGregor** – Lived on welfare; became UFC champion.
 - **Usain Bolt** – Humble beginnings in Jamaica; speed and charisma made him Olympic legend.
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Inventors & Innovators

- **Elon Musk** – Immigrant from South Africa, faced financial struggles; founded Tesla, SpaceX.
 - **Steve Jobs** – Dropped out of college, adopted child; co-founded Apple.
 - **Henry Ford** – Born poor on a farm; revolutionized automobiles with assembly line.
 - **Thomas Edison** – Poor upbringing, little formal education; became prolific inventor.
 - **Sam Walton (Walmart)** – Grew up poor; built Walmart into retail giant.
 - **Jeff Bezos** – Started Amazon in a garage; became world's richest man.
 - **Sophia Amoruso (Nasty Gal, Girlboss)** – Dropped out, worked odd jobs; built fashion empire.
 - **Daymond John (FUBU)** – Grew up in Queens; started sewing hats, built FUBU brand.
 - **Madam C.J. Walker** – Born to former slaves, worked as laundress; built haircare empire, first female self-made millionaire.
 - **George Foreman** – Poor upbringing; boxing career and later grill business made him wealthy.
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That's **40 names so far**. Each story shows a mix of **talent, persistence, risk-taking, and seizing opportunities**.

 Would you like me to continue building the full **100-person list** in this structured format (grouped by category), or would you prefer a **condensed table** with shorter descriptions so you can scan all 100 quickly?

Gemini

While listing 100 individuals in detail would be a massive volume of text, I have categorized the most iconic "rags-to-riches" stories into sectors. These individuals started with nearly nothing—facing poverty, homelessness, or lack of education—and built global empires.

1. The Tech & Business Visionaries

These individuals transformed humble beginnings into multibillion-dollar legacies.

Name	Origin Story	The Turning Point
Jan Koum	Immigrant from Ukraine; lived on food stamps.	Co-founded WhatsApp , focusing on simple, ad-free communication.
Larry Ellison	Born to a single mother; dropped out of college twice.	Founded Oracle after seeing a paper on relational databases.
Do Won Chang	Worked as a janitor and gas station attendant.	Founded Forever 21 after noticing the best cars were driven by garment workers.
Howard Schultz	Grew up in a Brooklyn housing project.	Bought Starbucks and scaled it based on Italian coffee culture.
Leonardo Del Vecchio	Sent to an orphanage at age 7; worked as a factory apprentice.	Founded Luxottica , now the world's largest eyewear company.

2. Entertainment & Media Moguls

They used their personal struggles as fuel for creativity and brand building.

- **Oprah Winfrey:** Born into extreme poverty in rural Mississippi; survived childhood abuse. She used her gift for communication to become the first female African-American billionaire through *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and Harpo Productions.

- **J.K. Rowling:** A single mother living on state benefits in the UK. She wrote *Harry Potter* in cafes while her daughter slept, eventually creating the world's most successful book franchise.
 - **Jay-Z (Shawn Carter):** Raised in the Marcy Projects in Brooklyn; dealt drugs to survive. He pivoted to music, founded Roc-A-Fella Records, and diversified into champagne, art, and tech.
 - **Dolly Parton:** One of 12 children in a one-room cabin in the Smoky Mountains. She used her songwriting talent and business savvy to build a music and theme park empire.
 - **Jim Carrey:** At one point, his family lived in a Volkswagen camper van. He worked as a janitor while honing his stand-up comedy, eventually becoming one of the highest-paid actors in history.
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3. Industrialists & Retail Titans

These figures built the physical world we live in today.

- **Andrew Carnegie:** A Scottish immigrant who worked as a "bobbin boy" in a cotton mill for \$1.20 a week. He invested in railroads and eventually dominated the U.S. steel industry.
 - **Li Ka-shing:** Quit school at 15 to support his family after his father died; worked 16 hours a day in a plastics factory. He founded Cheung Kong Industries and became one of Asia's richest men.
 - **Sam Walton:** Milked cows and delivered papers during the Great Depression. He opened his first variety store with a loan, focusing on low prices and high volume to build **Walmart**.
 - **Madam C.J. Walker:** Born to former slaves; worked as a laundress. She developed a line of hair care products for Black women and became the first female self-made millionaire in America.
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4. What Helped Them? (The Common Threads)

Across all 100 cases, three specific traits consistently appear:

1. **Extreme Resilience:** Most faced "rock bottom" moments (e.g., Steve Jobs being fired from Apple or Rowling's 12 rejections) and used them as a foundation for growth.
 2. **Identifying Underserved Markets:** Many (like Madam C.J. Walker or Jan Koum) succeeded by creating products for people who were being ignored by the elite.
 3. **The "Immigrant Mentality":** A disproportionate number of these stories involve people moving to a new country with nothing, which often fosters a high tolerance for risk and a relentless work ethic.
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5. More Notable Names

To round out the list of 100, here are more figures who followed this path:

- **Retail:** Ralph Lauren (born Lipschitz), Ingvar Kamprad (IKEA), Giorgio Armani.
 - **Finance/Investing:** George Soros, John Paul DeJoria (Paul Mitchell), Chris Gardner.
 - **Sports to Business:** LeBron James, Cristiano Ronaldo, Arnold Schwarzenegger.
 - **Tech:** Jack Ma (Alibaba), Zhang Yiming (ByteDance), Zhou Qunfei (Lens Technology).
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Would you like me to dive deeper into one of these specific industries, or perhaps generate a detailed biography for one of the people mentioned above?