

## Greatness

Just as there are many definitions of success, there are also many definitions of greatness. Alexander Smith said, “The great man is the man who does a thing for the first time.” He is right and the list of those great people is long and includes the likes of Neil Armstrong, Alexander Fleming, and Thomas Edison. But Smith’s definition is not broad enough to include many other people, beyond doubt, who are great as well. Greatness can also be attained by doing something to improve the lives of others. One example was Mother Teresa. Another is Albert Schweitzer, and a third is Harriet Tubman.

Mother Teresa may be a good example of great people to come to mind under this broadened definition. Mother Teresa, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, dedicated her life to helping the poor, the sick, and the hungry. She left her homeland of Yugoslavia to work with the impoverished people of India, where she selflessly served others for almost 70 years. She founded the Missionaries of Charity sisterhood and the House for the Dying. She embraced those that many in society chose to disdain and ignore: the crippled and diseased, the homeless and helpless. She was what it means, to be compassionate towards others. This made her great.

A further great person who also won a Nobel Peace Prize was Dr. Albert Schweitzer, a German doctor who, like Mother Teresa, also unselfishly served the unfortunate and sick. Schweitzer dedicated himself to the people of the continent of wars and insecurity: Africa. There, he built a hospital and a leper colony, a refuge for those who had been in need. He gave them food, shelter, medical care, and the compassion that so many others denied them. Without his hospital, people would suffer or die. Schweitzer was not the first to offer care and comfort for the sick and suffering. But he was certainly a great man.

In addition to these two eminent names, Harriet Tubman is clearly a notable illustration of greatness. She is famous for being a woman who kept going back to the South to free slaves. She led them through the “underground railroad” and brought them to freedom. She led hundreds of American slaves to freedom, risking her life over and over again to bring her fellow slaves to freedom. She gave them the greatest gift one can offer; freedom to live a better way of life. She was not the first to escape, and she wasn’t the first to go back for others. But she was the one who kept going back. She knew that each time she returned for another, she was risking her life. But like Mother Teresa and Dr. Schweitzer, Harriet Tubman was utterly dedicated to improving the lives of others.

Greatness comes in many forms, and we are lucky to have many examples of greatness upon which to model our lives. Some great people are those who were able to be the first to accomplish something marvellous. Others, like Mother Teresa, Albert Schweitzer, and Harriet Tubman, are great because they worked tirelessly to ease the suffering of their fellow human beings.