

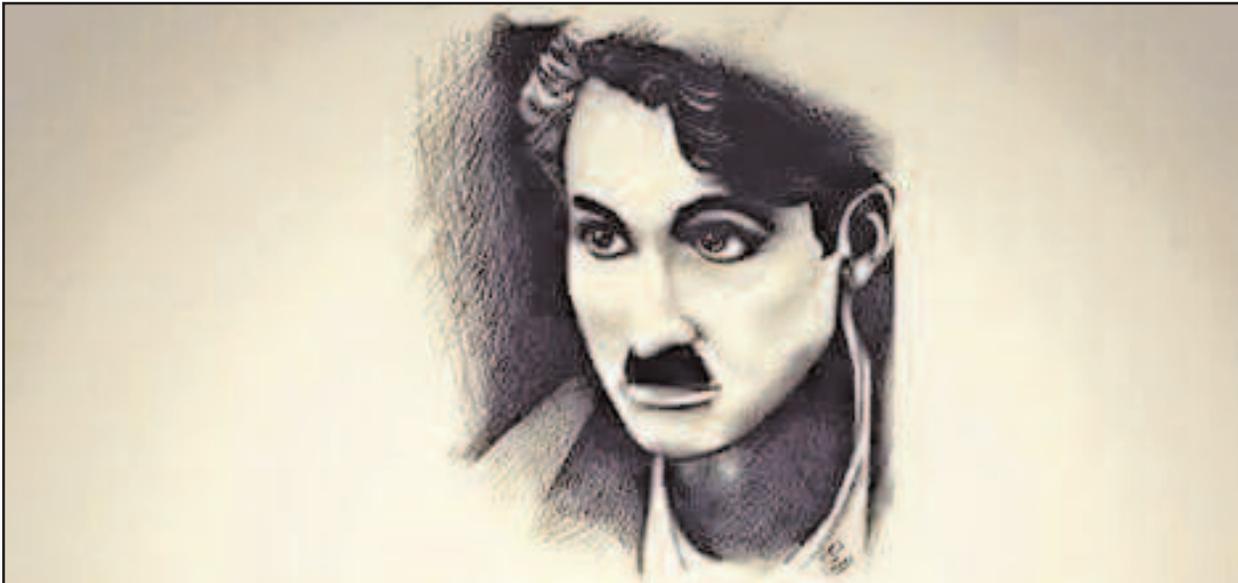
What we can learn from Charlie Chaplin

Sir Charles Spencer "Charlie" Chaplin, KBE was an English comic actor filmmaker, and composer who rose to fame in the silent era. Chaplin became a worldwide icon through his screen persona "the Tramp" and is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the film industry. His career spanned more than 75 years, from childhood in the Victorian era until a year before his death in 1977, and encompassed both adulation and controversy. Chaplin's

Remembering on his Birth Anniversary (16th APRIL)

childhood in London was one of poverty and hardship. As his father was absent and his mother struggled financially, he was sent to a workhouse twice before the age of nine. When he was 14, his mother was committed to a mental asylum. Chaplin began performing at an early age, touring music halls and later working as a stage actor and comedian. At 19 he was signed to the prestigious Fred Karno company, which took him to America. Chaplin was scouted for the film industry, and began appearing in 1914 for Keystone Studios. He soon developed the Tramp persona and formed a large fan base. Chaplin directed his own films from an early stage, and continued to hone his craft as he moved to the Essanay, Mutual, and First National corporations. By 1918, he was one of the best known figures in the world. In 1919, Chaplin co-founded the distribution company United Artists, which gave him complete control over his films. His first feature-length was *The Kid* (1921), followed by *A Woman of Paris* (1923) *The Gold Rush* (1925), and *The Circus* (1928). He refused to move to sound films in the 1930s, instead producing *City Lights* (1931) and *Modern Times* (1936) without dialogue. Chaplin became increasingly political, and his next film, *The Great Dictator* (1940), satirised Adolf Hitler. The 1940s were a decade marked with controversy for Chaplin, and his popularity declined rapidly. He was accused of communist sympathies, while his involvement in a paternity suit and marriages to much younger women caused scandal. An FBI investigation was opened, and Chaplin was forced to leave the United States and settle in Switzerland. He

abandoned the Tramp in his later films, which include *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), *Limelight* (1952), *A King in New York* (1957), and *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967). Chaplin wrote, directed, produced, edited, starred in, and composed the music for most of his films. He was a perfectionist, and his financial independence enabled him to spend years on the development and production of a picture. His films are characterised by slapstick combined with pathos, typified in the Tramp's struggles against adversity. Many contain social and political themes, as well as autobiographical elements. In 1972, as part of a renewed appreciation for his work, Chaplin received an Honorary Academy Award for "the incalculable effect he has had in making motion pictures the art form of this century". He continues to be held in high regard, with *The Gold Rush*, *City Lights*, *Modern Times*, and *The Great Dictator* often ranked on industry lists of the greatest films of all time. Charles Spencer Chaplin was born on 16 April 1889 to Hannah Chaplin (born Hannah Harriet Pedlingham Hill) and Charles Chaplin, Sr. There is no official record of his birth, although Chaplin believed he was born at East Street, Walworth, in South London. His mother and father had married four years previously, at which time Charles Sr. became the legal carer of Hannah's illegitimate son, Sydney John Hill. At the time of his birth, Chaplin's parents were both music hall entertainers.



You need Power, only when you want to do something Harmful, Otherwise Love is Enough to get everything done.

-Charlie chaplin

Hannah, the daughter of a shoemaker, had a brief and unsuccessful career under the stage name Lily Harley, while Charles Sr., a butcher's son, was a popular singer. Although they never divorced, Chaplin's parents were estranged by around 1891. The following year, Hannah gave birth to a third son George Wheeler Dryden fathered by the music hall entertainer Leo Dryden. The child was taken by Dryden at six months old, and did not enter Chaplin's life for 30 years. By October 1977, Chaplin's health had declined to the point that he needed constant care. In the early morning of 25 December 1977, Chaplin died at home after suffering a stroke in his sleep. He was 88 years old. The funeral, on 27 December, was a small and private Anglican ceremony, according to his wishes. Chaplin was interred in the Corsier sur-Vecy cemetery. Among the film industry's tributes, director René Clair wrote, "He was a monument of the cinema, of all countries and all times. the most beautiful gift the cinema made to us." Actor Bob Hope declared, "We were lucky to have lived in his time." On 1 March 1978, Chaplin's coffin was dug up and stolen from its grave by two unemployed immigrants, Roman Wardas, from Poland, and Gantcho Ganev, from Bulgaria. The body was held for ransom in an attempt to extort money from Oona Chaplin. The pair were caught in a large police operation in May, and Chaplin's coffin was found buried in a field in the nearby village of Noville. It was re-interred in the Corsier cemetery surrounded by reinforced concrete. Chaplin received many awards and honours, especially later in life. In the 1975 New Year Honours, he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. He was also awarded honorary Doctor of Letters degrees by the University of Oxford and the University of Durham in 1962. In

1965 he and Ingmar Bergman were joint winners of the Erasmus Prize and in 1971 he was appointed a Commander of the National Order of the Legion of Honour by the French government. From the film industry, Chaplin received a special Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1972, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Lincoln Center Film Society the same year. The latter has since been presented annually to filmmakers as The Chaplin Award. Chaplin was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1972, having been previously excluded because of his political beliefs. Agency

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