

Oprah Winfrey and the American Dream

The term “American dream” is basically an idea that suggests that anyone in the US can succeed through hard work and has the potential to lead a happy, successful life. The idea of the American dream is perfectly shown in the saying “from rags⁵ to riches”. It describes people who begin their lives extremely poor and end up being rich.



Oprah Winfrey herself can be seen as a living example of the American dream.

Born in 1954 to a very young and single mother, she spent the first six years of her life on her grandmother’s farm in Mississippi. Oprah’s grandmother was so poor that she even had to wear potato sacks as dresses. When Oprah was six, her grandmother fell ill and Oprah moved to Milwaukee to live with her mother. There the young girl’s life turned into a nightmare.⁶ After being sexually abused⁷ by relatives several times, she tried to run away from home. She became pregnant, but the baby died only two weeks after its birth. Oprah began to steal and to lie, so her helpless mother sent Oprah to live with her father. He was very strict and he made Oprah read one book each week. Under his discipline Oprah soon became very successful in school. She won several prizes for her speeches and was even given a full scholarship to Tennessee University. At the age of 17 she won a beauty contest and was offered a job at a radio station. After doing some more jobs on TV, Oprah’s career really took off with the morning show ‘*AM Chicago*’ which was later renamed ‘*The Oprah Winfrey Show*’.

Now, Oprah Winfrey is one of the most famous women worldwide. With 2.7 billion dollars she is the richest black woman in the United States. She owns her own TV network *OWN* (Oprah Winfrey network), publishes the two magazines ‘*O, The Oprah Magazine*’ and ‘*O at home*’ and has changed the lives of millions of people all over the world.



She really shows people that the American dream is alive.

“I don't think of myself as a poor, deprived ghetto girl who made good. I think of myself as somebody who from an early age knew she was responsible for herself-and I had to make good.”

—Oprah Winfrey

⁵ > bad clothes

⁶ > a bad dream

⁷ sexuell missbraucht