

It couldn't be done is a phrase used by Edgar Guest to show that a positive outlook can shape your whole reality. The poem relates to an experience my grandfather, Harry Musikas, had in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He was stuck in a communist country and wanted better for his life. His father grew up in Estonia which was part of the Soviet Union at the time, and during World War II, he moved to China to become a captain in the Merchant Marines. During his childhood, my grandfather would stand on the rooftops in Shanghai, China and watch the Japanese bomb his city, hoping that he would just survive. As the war was ending, China became a communist country and his family had to flee.

They bravely boarded a ship and left with no country to call home. Harry, his sister, mother, and father sailed along the South China coast for many years without a home. He was self-taught and read books during the day while also working on the ship. His father tried desperately to get a visa to the United States, but because they were of Chinese and Russian citizenship, they "couldn't."

His story somehow was received by a local aristocrat in New York City who had heard about the situation. The aristocrat had heard the ship was making a trip to New York City Harbor, and he wanted to meet them. Afterward, the gentleman generously sponsored them to become citizens of the United States. So, finally, they acquired a home in New York. However, since my grandfather had no formal education, his future was limited.

Moreover, Harry desired to live the "American Dream" and needed to attend college; he "tackled the thing" and met with the dean of Georgetown University. The university told him that if the test was passed, he might be accepted. Harry attended the School of Foreign Service. After we graduated, he, fortunately, became an executive with Exxon Mobil Corporation. My grandfather is a story of someone who had all the odds stacked against him, overcame everything, and he is now retired spending his summers in Connecticut and winters in Florida.

All in all, the phrase in Guest's poem: "There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done, there are thousands to prophesy failure..." shows the true perseverance that it takes to try something that they all say "couldn't be done."