



Community of Character

Perseverance

January Perseverance

Character Qualities

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Thankfulness
- Caring
- Perseverance
- Unity
- Integrity
- Service
- Moral Courage
- Citizenship
- Fairness
- Self Control

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

Thomas Alva Edison

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Perseverance is the quality of refusing to give up, and continuing on in spite of difficulty or opposition. Hard work and *perseverance* lead to success in reaching our goals. We should always remember that when the task is easy, anyone can do it. It is only when we persevere and accomplish tasks that are difficult that we set ourselves apart from the others. *Perseverance* also involves learning from failure. Often we "fail into success!" Failure offers a motivation to get better, an opportunity to learn and grow, and it may open a door that is better for you than that in which you failed!

Perseverance is an important key to success! When a person meets well-set goals, he/she sets higher goals, so success is always a moving target toward a fulfilled and meaningful life.

These individuals each showed great determination and overcame major obstacles in order to reach their goals.

- **Abraham Lincoln** rose from a humble childhood in the Indiana frontier to the nation's highest office. He received less than a year of formal education as a child, and traveled miles to borrow books in order to learn. Our 16th President ended slavery in the U.S. and influenced the course of world history by preventing the Union from splitting into two nations.
- **John Chapman ("Johnny Appleseed")** was an American pioneer who spent most of his life planting apple seeds along the early frontier. Because of his vision and determination, many generations have enjoyed the fruits of his work.
- A newspaper editor fired **Walt Disney** because "he had no good ideas."
- **Louisa May Alcott** was told by an editor she would never write anything popular. A century later, *Little Women* is considered one of the best American children's books of the past 200 years.

- **Ludwig van Beethoven** composed many of his greatest works after he was stricken with deafness.
- Former Angels' pitcher, **Jim Abbott**, spent most of his life proving doubters wrong. Born without a right hand, Abbott overcame incredible obstacles to reach his goal of becoming a major league pitcher.
- **Helen Keller** overcame blindness and deafness to become a success and a role model to others.
- **Thomas Edison's** parents pulled him out of school after teachers called him "stupid" and "unteachable." Edison spent his teenage years working and being fired from various jobs, but he made 1093 inventions. Inventing the light bulb required more than 10,000 attempts! He didn't give up!

Aesop's famous fable also gives us a picture of the result of *perseverance*.

The Hare and the Tortoise

An Aesop's Fable on *Perseverance*

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. "I have never yet been beaten," said he. "When I put forth my full speed, I can run faster than any of you. I challenge anyone here to race with me."

The Tortoise said quietly, "I accept your challenge."

"That is a good joke," said the Hare. "I could dance round you all the way."

"Keep your boasting till you've won," answered the Tortoise. "Shall we race?"

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted out of sight at once. Soon, knowing that he was far ahead, he stopped to have a nap. Meanwhile, the Tortoise plodded along, slowly and steadily. When the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise nearing the finish line. The Hare leaped up and ran as fast as he could. But he was not in time. The Tortoise won the race. *Slow and steady wins the race.*

Books and Movies of Character

Fiction Books

The Little Engine that Could, by Watty Piper (Preschool to 3rd grade)

Bartlett and the Ice Voyage, by Odo Hirsch (4th to 7th grade)

Being Teddy Roosevelt, by Claudia Mills (2nd to 5th grade)

Clorinda, by Robert Kinerk (Preschool to 3rd grade)

Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream, by Roslyn Jordan (Preschool to 3rd)

Leonardo's Dream, by Hans de Beer (Preschool to 3rd Grade)

Nonfiction Books

Scientist with Determination, Elma Gonzalez, by Mary Ellen Verheyden-Hilliard (1st to 4th grade)

The Story of Helen Keller, by Rachel A. Koestler-Grack (2nd to 4th grade)

Never Fear, Never Quit: a Story of Courage and Perseverance, by Joe Tye

Unstoppable: 45 Powerful Stories of Perseverance and Triumph From People Just Like You, by Cynthia Kersey

Movies

Rudy
Women in Gold

What is Perseverance?

- Setting a goal and striving to reach it, no matter what happens.
- Putting forth the effort to do the job; "no pain, no gain."
- Learning and continuing after you fail!
- Working hard to achieve success.
- Refusing to give up.
- Giving everything you do 100%.
- Being brave and positive as you tackle new challenges.

Quotes

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to happen." *Frank Lloyd Wright*

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing." *Abraham Lincoln*

"Many strokes, though with a little ax, can tear down the hardest oak." *William Shakespeare*

"A trip of a thousand miles starts with one step." *Chinese Proverb*

"For all of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all. And all you have to do to win, is rise each time you fall." *From The Race, D. H. Groberg*

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." *Thomas H. Palmer*

"For every failure, there is an alternative course of action. You just have to find it. When you come to a roadblock, take a detour." *Mary Kay Ash*

"Never, never, never give up." *Winston Churchill*

Practicing Perseverance

- Keep trying!
- When the opportunity to give up arises, say no, and do everything you can to reach your goal.
- Always do your best; run in such a way as to get the prize.
- Do not let your fears choose who you are or what you do, but instead overcome them.
- Learn from your failures. Fail into success!
- Allow difficult times to make you stronger.
- Discipline yourself to do whatever is required to meet the challenge.
- Whatever you do, do it with all of your heart.
- Look for the opportunity in every problem, rather than the problem in every opportunity.
- As Norman Vincent Peale advises, "If you want to get somewhere you have to know where you want to go and how to get there, then never, never, never give up."

Applying Perseverance

- Parents set an example for your children; role model determination and hard work in pursuing a goal.
- Teach children patience in working and saving towards a desired item or goal.

- Read motivational stories. *The Little Engine That Could* teaches children the importance of attitude in overcoming obstacles. "I think I can, I think I can," are words kids can remember and apply.
- Watch the suggested "Movies of Character" as a family and discuss.
- Train children to stick with a commitment to a sports team or music lessons and put in the time required for practice.
- In the words of Colin Powell, "A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work."
- William Bennett's advice on encouraging children to persevere: "By standing by them, and with them and behind them; by being coaches and cheerleaders, and by the witness of our own example."

Personal commitments to Perseverance:

- I will set goals for myself.
- I will always do my best.
- I will not quit!
- I will learn from my mistakes and move on. I may "fail into success!"
- I will choose to excel and devote daily effort to achieve it.
- I will draw on courage and discipline as I pursue my goals.