

Developing Your Perseverance

Persistence, determination, and perseverance are all closely related and are the key to having a successful life.

Persistence is holding on to something important and not letting go despite hindering circumstances. Determination can be defined as firmness of purpose; resolve. Perseverance is commitment, hard work, patience, and endurance. Perseverance is being able to handle difficulties calmly and without complaint. Perseverance is trying again and again until you succeed.

People who persevered despite handicaps and disabilities include the following:

- Beethoven (composer) - was deaf
- Ray Charles (musician) - was blind
- James Earl Jones (actor) - was a stutterer
- Helen Keller (author) - was deaf and blind
- Franklin D. Roosevelt (president) - was paralyzed from polio
- Vincent Van Gogh (artist) - was mentally ill
- Stephen Hawking (physicist) - has Lou Gehrig's disease

These people are great examples of achieving in spite of significant obstacles. They personify the adage, "It's not our situation; it's our reaction to our situation that really counts." Helen Keller said, "We can do anything we want to if we stick to it long enough."

Every four years, we witness young athletes from around the world who have been persevering in their respective sports for most of their young lives. It is inspiring to watch them compete at a high level, at the Olympics, in spite of stiff competition and untold pressure.

Put perseverance into action:

- When something bothers you, do not get frustrated.
- When you don't get the results you want, try again and again.
- Stay calm when something upsets you.
- Always finish what you start.
- Work a little harder or a few minutes longer on difficult tasks.

Perseverance is about finishing what you start. Ninety percent of all failure comes from not starting or quitting too soon. Thomas Edison said, "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." Brian Tracy said, "Sometimes your greatest asset is simply your ability to stay with it longer than anyone else."

It is difficult to persevere if you are tired. When your "battery" is run down or you are running on fumes, your mind is susceptible to negative thinking. In these circumstances, you are more likely to react, blow things out of proportion, and say things that you will regret.

Watch for the signs that you need to recharge your "battery," such as: tiredness, being easily frustrated, tension in your muscles, and feeling discouraged to name just a few. Here are some things you can do to recharge your battery:

1. Take a mental break: read or listen to inspirational or motivational material, spend some time on a hobby, call a friend, or listen to calming music.
2. Take a physical break: rest, take a nap, go for a walk, eat something healthy, take some deep breaths, or exercise.

"Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to unlocking our potential."

Sir Winston Churchill (1874–1965)