

Making a Difference – The Power of Persistence

Do you want to just make up the numbers? Or, do you really want to make a difference (in your world)? It's up to you! Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." In order to persevere you must persist. Persistence is a very powerful tool in life. Talking about Moses in Hebrews 11:27 the scripture states, "*By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered (patiently persisted) because he saw Him who is invisible.*"

Notice, Moses was able to exercise patience, and be persistent, because he had seen God. Today, we see God in His infallible word. Therefore, none of us has any excuse for not being patient or persistent in life. In fact, the 'Word' should make us the most persistent and determined people on the planet! And as a result, we can achieve all our goals and fulfil our destiny in God. Success should be second nature to us!

Persistence and failure cannot coexist. Failure happens when you quit. When all is said and done, persistence is the ultimate success insurance. Nothing can take its place. Being persistent in life is a very, very important. Something that's absolutely necessary if you are going to achieve your goals. We all love reading about the lives of people who faced adversity – yet succeeded by being persistent; famous individuals who never quit and finally realised all their dreams. The courage they displayed was only matched by their persistence in the face of extreme challenges and impossibilities. But sometimes, rather than help us or spur us on, such wonderful examples serve only to make us feel more inadequate. Yet, such great accomplishments are never really about the amazing strength our heroes have exhibited, rather, it's about their strong 'desire' to succeed.

Your persistence and determination is directly linked to your desire. You'll never leave where you are, until you desire to be somewhere else. Your degree of desire will determine how persistent you will become. If you want or need something bad enough, you will develop the mindset and energy level to persevere all the obstacles and disappointments put before you. Abraham did just that. He demonstrated his faith by leaving home and journeying to unknown lands. Right-minded desires get God's attention. This applied to the elders whom God gladly acknowledged. "*Instead, they were desiring a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them*" - Hebrews 11:16.

All of us need to be positive and persistent as we face life's challenges. But at the same time, we (as Christians) must set an example and be a role model for those looking on – so they also won't quit when the going gets tough.

If you are unwilling to loose, and always make an extra attempt, rarely will you loose. But where sits your desire? Is it half on and half off? Or is it merely an, "*I quite like the idea,*" but nothing else?

Persistent people diligently sort through obstacles and practice perseverance, while others merely execute their well thought out plans and objectives. This quality of persistence grows stronger as you recognise that it helps you to "get exactly where you want to go!" Once you have determined exactly what it is you want to accomplish, you need to take deliberate action on a consistent, persistent basis in order to succeed.

Think of it like building a muscle. If you have never weight trained before, the first time you walk into a gym, chances are you will not be able to bench press 250 lbs. However, if you are persistent, and you consistently go back to the gym, you'll find yourself getting stronger and closer to your goal with each and every visit.

One of the things you'll notice on your journey towards your goals, are roadblocks. That is, you will encounter obstacles that seem to jump out of nowhere in an attempt to halt your progress. Accept these obstacles, as they are a part of life. If you were cushioned from every blow you'd never grow. Everyone would have every success they ever wanted if there were no obstacles. It's your duty to be persistent and to work through those obstacles. If you find little or no resistance along the way, chances are you are not really challenging yourself - or impacting for God. Without having to fight, when you eventually reach your objectives, you won't experience the feeling of 'sweet success'. So make your goal a challenging one. If you can achieve it right now, with the abilities and resources you have, it's definitely not the right goal (and God's not in it). There needs to be a good sprinkling of the impossible present for it to be the right one.

Don't be timid! Failure is not terminal! If you take the time to study any successful person, you will learn that the vast majority of them have had more 'failures' than they have had successes. This is because successful people are very persistent; the more they stumble and fall, the more they get right back up and get going again. On the other hand, people that don't get back up and try again, never attain any success. For example, Walt Disney was turned down 302 times before he got financing for his dream of creating the "Happiest Place on Earth". Today, due to his persistence, millions of people have shared 'the joy of Disney'. Colonel Sanders spent two years driving across the United States looking for restaurants to buy his chicken recipe. He was turned down 1,009 times! How successful is Kentucky Fried Chicken today?

Having said this, keep in mind that you must constantly re-evaluate your personal circumstances and the approach you are using to reach your desired goal. There is no sense in being persistent at something that you are doing incorrectly! Sometimes you may have to modify your approach along the way. You may have to adjust your course or change your destination.

But do whatever it takes, and decide to be persistent at any cost. Next time you deliberately move toward a goal, remind yourself that you can learn from your mistakes. This will help you to look for a better way of doing it without the fear of failure. Those individuals we use as examples of persistence in adverse conditions, never feared failure. They simply kept on going, or made an extra effort when it mattered most. Does this qualify them for "genius" status? Probably not!

In Philippians 3:13 Paul says, *"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead."* The main reason there's been so many failures among those who started out with high hopes, is that they got bogged down with their past and consequently lacked "staying" power. They could not stay the course: and what's the point in running if you can't do the distance?

Persistence outlasts every battle. Its light is seen long after the dust has settled. Persistence never stops to consider whether it is succeeding or not. The only question is how to keep pushing ahead. How to get a little further along – a little nearer to the finishing post. Whether it means climbing mountains, crossing rivers or ravines, persistence has the resolve to get there. Every other consideration is sacrificed for this one dominant purpose. Genuine persistence is insistent on gaining ascendancy, and it is prepared to overcome every weakness – physical, mental or spiritual.

Great success comes from great determination, great self-discipline and self-mastery. Maybe, this is equal to genius itself! Genius is often perseverance in disguise. No amount of genius ever had a significant effect on anything, except when being enforced with the "staying power" to overcome all obstacles that presented

themselves. I admire a person who rises above the circumstances in which he was born, to become greater than his allotment in life. Tenacity of purpose never changes through the ups and downs, or if there's a sudden turn of events, it chooses to conquer all opposition in order to arrive at its chosen destination.

But it's your vision and sense of purpose that will fuel your greatness. *"This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently and persevere, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed"* (Habakkuk 2:3). Vision – with tenacity of purpose, perseverance, persistence, determination, consistency of intention - produce success. They set greatness in motion! But greatness left unexecuted is no more greatness than an unlit lamp is a light to a room.

Today is the day to begin your new journey. Using tenacity of purpose and consistency of intention, take a giant step towards tomorrow's successes. Stop looking at where you have been and start looking at where you can be. Stop thinking about what has happened, and start thinking about what you can make happen. The staying power is already in you - so aim to go the full distance.

Here are three people who were persistent and persevered despite having learning disabilities:

- Thomas Edison (inventor) - had a learning problem
- Albert Einstein (scientist) - had a learning disability
- Woodrow Wilson (president) - had a learning problem

"Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbelievable combination for success." (Napoleon Hill - American Author)