

# PERSISTENCE

It is so easy to want to give up at things that are hard: but in the long run, they are worth the work! This month we will address the concept of perseverance. We will talk about how perseverance helps shape our goals, outcomes and path in getting there.

According to dictionary.com the definition for perseverance is, “steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.”

Let’s allow this to shape the direction of our conversation.



## A short story: How to persist and persevere

A middle aged man who goes by the name of Oliver approaches a monastery located high atop the Himalayan Mountains. He’s tired, sad, disheartened and somewhat angry. He’s trekked here for weeks in order to find answers — answers to his struggles, and answers for the setbacks that seem to be keeping him away from his greatest accomplishments. He enters the monastery and out of exhaustion drops to the floor. Lying there face down on the ground he thinks about his wasted life, about the problems that always seem to get in his way, and about the difficulties that he faces every single day. Life seems like an uphill battle that never ends. It seems as though he’s carrying the world on his shoulders and the burden is simply too heavy for him to bare.

A moment passes, when suddenly a dark figure approaches and helps him off the ground. Oliver looks up and sees the kind face of a Monk looking back at him. This face is familiar and welcoming. The Monk sits him down without saying a word and just gazes into Oliver’s eyes. What he sees is heartache, defeat and despair. Oliver’s face looks very familiar, and it should, because he was in fact an orphan who was raised within this Monastery as a child.

**Monk:** “What brings you back here my dear friend?”

**Oliver:** “Master, you are all knowing, and I’ve come here searching for answers. I have all these hopes and dreams; I want to accomplish all these amazing things, however, everything I do seems to lead down a path to despair. I am a total failure, and I just don’t know what to do. I’ve experienced so many heartbreaking losses over the years that I just feel like I have no more to give.”

**Monk:** “Did you know that time and again, history has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed? They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeat.”

**How does this defeat make me stronger?**

**What opportunities does it present me with?**

**What’s the next step I must take?**

**Oliver:** “Yes, I’ve been there. So many obstacles, but I still haven’t triumphed. I seem to be stuck in the same place, going nowhere.”

**Monk:** “Yes, you may not be there yet, but you’re certainly closer than you were yesterday. You made the trek up here for answers, did you not?”

**How am I closer?**

**What must I do next?**

**Oliver:** “Yes.”

**Monk:** “Well then, you are closer than you were yesterday to finding the answers you’re searching for, are you not?”

**Oliver:** “Yes, but it seems as though I’ve tried everything, and nothing seems to have worked. I have a good education. My friends and family even tell me that I have the talent to achieve anything my heart desires, and I honestly believe that, but so far, nothing.”

**Monk:** “Oliver, please listen to my words carefully. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “Press On” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”

**Where can I try harder?**

**How can I push myself further?**

**Oliver:** “Okay, I see your point, but things always seem so hard that I just feel like giving up.”

**Monk:** “That which we persist in doing becomes easier, not that the task itself has become easier, but that our ability to perform it has improved.”

**What have I learned?**

**How have I improved?**

**How can this help me moving forward?**

**Oliver:** “So what you’re saying is that through the act of persistence things will become easier. I think I get that. It’s like a skill. I persist through something and eventually I learn more about what works and doesn’t work and as a result I get better. But... but I’m afraid. I guess I’m afraid of making a mistakes, and of failure.”

**Monk:** “There is no failure for the man who realizes his power, who never knows when he is beaten; there is no failure for the determined endeavor, the conquerable will. There is no failure for the man who gets up every time he falls, who rebounds like a rubber ball, who persists when everyone else gives up, who pushes on when everyone else turns back.”

**I think I can do this...**

**I know I can do this...**

**I believe I can do this...**

**I’m certain I can do this...**

**Let’s just do this...**

**Oliver:** “Okay, I see where you’re coming from. I have to get up each time I fall down like a rubber ball. I really like that analogy. Actually on some days I’ve spent time meditating and contemplating, like you do here in the mountains. I’m hopeful that my meditations and visualizations will help me to become more aware and spot opportunities throughout the day.”

**Monk:** “And that is where you make a mistake my dear friend. You must stop meditating and keep moving forward, and the chances are that you will stumble on something, perhaps when you least expect it. I never heard of anyone ever stumbling on something sitting down. I certainly haven’t. There’s nothing else for me to do here but to meditate. The only thing I’ll stumble across, is down a set of stairs.”

**Get up! Get Moving! Just Do it!**

**Opportunities are everywhere. Go out and get them.**

**Monk:** “If you get off your butt and just keep moving forward you will soon realize that you just can’t beat a person who never gives up.”

**Oliver:** “Do you think that is why some people succeed? Is it because they simply don’t give up?”

**Monk:** “Yes, of course. Even people of mediocre ability sometimes achieve outstanding success because they don’t know when to quit. Most men succeed because they are determined to. Their intelligence isn’t what gives them the edge. What gives them the edge is that they stay with problems longer and persist while others are quitting.”

**How else could this problem be solved?**

**What else could I do here?**

**Stick with it, just a little longer...**

**Oliver:** “But it sometimes seems as though I work so hard, spend so long on something and I just seem to be making no progress at all. Life just doesn’t seem fair, and hard work doesn’t always bring results. There must be something more to it.”

**Monk:** “Have you ever seen a stone-cutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it? Yet at the hundred-and-first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not the last blow that did it, but all that had gone before.”

**Just keep chipping away...**

**Oliver:** “Wow, I love that. I guess you just have to have strength to keep moving on.”

**Monk:** “No you don’t. Strength has nothing to do with it. In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins — not through strength, but through persistence.”

**How am I making progress?**

**What more could I do?**

**Oliver:** “So what you’re basically saying is that success seems to be a matter of hanging on after others have let go. Is that right?”

**Monk:** “Yes, that is correct. And when you feel as though you’ve reached the end of your rope, simply tie a knot in it and hang on.”

**Oliver:** “Hang on, and don’t let go. That is good. I will use that the next time I’m facing a setback. I guess the toughest part is overcoming those really big obstacles that life tends to throw my way. They are like gigantic mountains in my path that I can’t seem to look beyond.”

**Monk:** “My dear Oliver. Did you not learn your lesson coming here today? Can I ask you, how many times you stumbled and fell while making the trek up this mountain to see me?”

**Oliver:** “Well, I guess I stumbled quite a number of times on my journey here.”

**Monk:** “But you kept getting back up and moving forward. You essentially bounced up like a rubber ball and made your way until you reached your destination. Is that correct?”

**Oliver:** “Yes, that is correct.” ;)

**Monk:** “Then there is only one more lesson you need to learn. The lesson is that nobody trips over mountains. It is the small pebbles that cause you to stumble. Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find you have crossed the mountain.”

**Just another step forward...**

And with that, the Monk stood up and walked away, leaving Oliver to contemplate the lessons learned.

(References: Sicinski, A., ‘How to Persist and Persevere’, Available at: <http://blog.iqmatrix.com/persist-persevere> )