

The Value of Perseverance

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I recently read an article about a pro football player named Tuzar Skipper who just made the 53-man roster for the Pittsburgh Steelers. What made his story fascinating is that this player was an undrafted linebacker who endured several tryouts with different teams just to make the initial 90-man roster. This afforded him the opportunity to compete with drafted players and future Hall of Famers during a grueling training camp and an even more daunting preseason schedule.

Interestingly, this series of challenges was “par for the course” since he grew up in foster homes and group homes his entire life, never finding a stable foster home until he entered his senior year of high school.

Upon reflection, I realized that Tuzar exemplifies the concept of perseverance.

What is it?

Perseverance is defined by Merriam-Webster as “continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure or opposition – steadfastness.” It is also an important character trait that enables success in business, and in life!

There are many examples of people who possess this trait, who overcame obstacles and hurdles before they finally achieved success. Milton Hershey failed several times before focusing on chocolate to create The Hershey Company. Walt Disney was fired from his first job at the Kansas City Star because he “lacked imagination and had no good ideas.” Steven Spielberg was rejected three times from the USC School of Theater, Film and Television, and eventually dropped out of college to pursue directing without a degree. J.K. Rowling (the Harry Potter author) faced 12 rejections from publishers before selling her book for the equivalent of \$4000.00.

How can you enhance perseverance?

All of us possess varying degrees of perseverance, and use it every day to pursue our goals and objectives.

However, those who have mastered the trait of perseverance take deliberate actions on a regular basis to ensure that they achieve success. Among other things, they do the following:

- Identify their goal or objective and develop a plan of action for achieving it. They understand why the goal is important to them and appreciate how others may benefit. Next, they formulate a plan of action, and test it to make sure it is realistic and viable.
- On a daily basis, they take actions in support of their plan of action, and keep the goal visible at all times. They also maintain their focus and reduce / eliminate distractions that interfere with the plan and the goal. This includes blocking out time spent on technology interruptions such as cell phones, iPads, etc., and instead dedicating time each day to focus on action steps in furtherance of goals.
- Maintain optimism throughout the process and reward themselves for each and every accomplishment along the way. This creates the proper mental frame of reference and promotes a positive feeling of success as they achieve progress toward their goal.
- Develop knowledge, skills and abilities that are important to possess in order to build competence. This requires deliberate effort, an investment of time and money, and may involve completing eLearning modules or instructor-led courses to learn necessary skills. It may also include seeking input from a trusted advisor, coach or mentor who can answer questions and offer sage advice.
- Address obstacles, hurdles and impediments immediately and brainstorm ways to overcome them with determination and creativity. Although this may often be a difficult task, those who achieve continuous success in the face of adversity usually develop innovative methods for overcoming pushback, negativity and obstructions that stand in their way. They are also resilient and adaptable as they encounter and overcome interference.
- Maintain persistence throughout the process, despite the challenges they encounter. Regardless of the number or severity of the impediments faced, those who possess true perseverance never give up and are relentless in the pursuit of their goals and objectives!

What are the benefits of perseverance?

The importance of perseverance in the business world (as in all aspects of life) is undeniable and is a critical personality trait that improves your ability to succeed as you pursue your hopes and dreams.

Among other things, the benefits of being persistent include the following:

- Develop Competence – learn and grow as you acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities
- Improve Confidence – enhance self-assurance arising from your ability to overcome obstacles
- Acquire Experience – that can be used to achieve success in the future
- Become a Role Model – serve as a role model for others to emulate in their drive for success
- Achieve Success – routinely accomplish goals and objectives in situations where others fail

In the final analysis, what is stopping you from persevering to achieve your goals?