



PERSISTENCE

BY BOB PROCTOR

If you were to choose just one part of your personality to develop that would virtually guarantee your success, I'd like to suggest that you place persistence at the top of your list.

Napoleon Hill, in his classic *Think and Grow Rich* felt so strongly about this subject, he devoted an entire chapter to it. Hill suggested, "There may be no heroic connotation to the word persistence but the quality is to your character what carbon is to steel."

Think about it. If you took a quick mental walk down memory lane and reviewed some of your accomplishments in the past – large and small – you would have to agree that persistence played an important role in your success.

Napoleon Hill studied many of the world's most successful people. He pointed out the only quality he could find in Henry Ford, Thomas Edison or a host of other notable greats, that he could not find in everyone else was persistence. What I found even more intriguing was the fact that Hill made comment of the fact that these individuals were often misunderstood to be ruthless or cold-blooded and that this misconception grew out of their habit of following through in all of their plans with persistence.

It's both interesting and sadly amusing to me that, as a society, we would be quick to criticize people for realizing they had an unshakeable power within them and were capable of overcoming any obstacle outside of them. This power would ultimately move them toward a greater chance of achieving any goal they set for themselves!

Milt Campbell is a good friend of mine. He and I have shared many hours together ... discussing the very topic of persistence. Milt was a Decathlete in the Olympic Games held in Helsinki, Finland in 1952. His goal was to capture gold for the US. Unfortunately, another fierce competitor who had taken home the gold four years previous in London wasn't satisfied with one gold, Bob Mathias wanted two; Milt had to settle for silver. That did not deter Milt one bit. He had formed the habit of persistence and four years later in Melbourne, Australia, Milt won the gold medal, earning him the title of the greatest athlete in the world.

On numerous occasions Milt has said, "There were many guys in school who were far better athletes than me, but they quit." I can recount story after story about individuals who overcame obstacles so great, but only did so because they dared persist. These individuals are no different than you and I.

Ultimately persistence becomes a way of life, but that is not where it begins. To develop the mental strength – persistence - you must first want something. You have to WANT something so much that it becomes a heated desire ... a passion in your belly. You must fall in love with that idea. Yes, literally fall in love with the idea and magnetize yourself to every part of the idea. At that point, persistence will be virtually automatic.

Persistence is a subject I have studied all of my adult life and I can tell you one thing I know for certain: very few people ever, mentally or verbally, say to themselves ... this is what I really want and I am prepared to give my life for it, and thus, they never develop the persistence to achieve it.

Persistence is a unique mental strength; a strength that is essential to combat the fierce power of the repeated rejections and numerous other obstacles that sit in waiting and are all part of winning in a fast-moving, ever-changing world. As Napoleon Hill found out, there are hundreds of highly successful men and women who have cut a path for others to follow, while leaving their mark on the scrolls of history ... and every one of these great individuals was persistent. In many cases it was the only quality that separated them from everyone else.

It is generally believed that a lack of persistence is a consequence of a weak willpower. That is not true. A person could have a highly evolved willpower and still lack the persistence required to keep moving forward in life. In more cases than not, if a person lacks persistence, they do not have a goal that is worthy of them, a desirable goal that excites them to their very core.

Though willpower is important in moving a person toward their goal, if there is ever a war between the will and the imagination, the imagination will win every time. What that means is: you're powered by desire and fueled by the dream you hold. Once you start to use your imagination to help you build a bigger picture of your dream, to define and refine it until you get it just right in your mind, the emotion that is triggered by that desire far outweighs any force that may be caused by sheer will alone. I am not suggesting the will does not have to be developed, it does. It must become highly developed in order to direct you toward the image with which you are emotionally involved.

Your intellectual factors hold the potential for enormous good when they are properly employed. However, you must remember that everything has an opposite and any of your intellectual factors can turn, without warning, into destructive lethal enemies when they are directed toward results that are not wanted. It is easy to find individuals who are persistently doing what they don't want to do and achieving results that they do not want. A lack of persistence is not their problem; that person is persisting to their own detriment. Ignorance and paradigms are the enemy that we must defeat. Everyone is persistent. Our objective must be to put persistence to work for us rather than against us.

Vision and desire have to be the focus of your attention if you're going to develop persistence into the great ally it can become.

Another excellent example of persistence was demonstrated when, in 1953, a beekeeper from Auckland, N.Z., Edmund Hillary and his native guide, Tenzing Norguay, became the first two people to climb Mt. Everest and return, after having tried and failed the two previous years.

Hillary had two obvious character strengths that took him to the very top—vision and desire. Even despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges, he had no trouble persisting with the strenuous acts that were required because every act was hooked into the image of him standing on top of the mountain. They were expressed because of his persistence, but he was persistent because he was emotionally involved with the image. Without persistence, all his skills would have meant nothing.

Persistence is an expression of the mental strength that is essential in almost every profession, where repeated rejection and obstacles are part of a daily routine.

In closing, let me give you four relatively simple steps that will help you to turn persistence into a habit. These steps can be followed by virtually anyone.

1. Have a clearly defined goal. The goal must be something you are emotionally involved with, something you want very much. (In the beginning, you may not even believe that you can accomplish it—the belief will come.)
2. Have a clearly established plan that you can begin working on immediately. (Your plan will very likely only cover the first and possibly the second stage of the journey to your goal. As you begin executing your plan, other steps required to complete your journey will be revealed at the right time.)
3. Make an irrevocable decision to reject any and all negative suggestions that come from friends, relatives or neighbors. Do not give any conscious attention to conditions or circumstances that appear to indicate the goal cannot be accomplished.
4. Establish a mastermind group of one or more people who will encourage, support and assist you wherever possible.

What do you dream of doing with your life? Do it. Begin right now and never quit. There is greatness in you. Let it out. Be persistent.