

## **Tenacity: Vital to Success**

For many, the demands of college are the greatest challenges they have yet faced. Daily, students are exposed to a barrage of new ideas that they must quickly grasp to meet ever present deadlines. This unrelenting process is made more difficult with schedule conflicts with work, financial difficulties, and other personal problems. Many are overwhelmed by it all, yet every year people graduate while others dropout. In most cases, only one thing separates those that graduate from those that dropout. That one thing is tenacity. Tenacity is found in all people that succeed and it has benefits even in failure.

Those that have tenacity will not quit when confronted by obstacles or when failing. In a game or in life, tenacity wants to win, and tenacity lives by the credo, "Failure is not an option." When failure is imminent, tenacity is the inner voice that declares, "I will not be denied!"

Whether it is known as willpower, determination, or persistence, it is the key to success. It pushes one to one's limits because it will not accept anything less than one's best. In the end, people with tenacity will win or break themselves trying, but just by giving their all, they have grown.

The importance of tenacity is stressed by those that have studied success. Napoleon Hill spent twenty years studying success and was a pioneer in the field. Hill determined that persistence was a key factor in achieving success. In his monumental book, Think and Grow Rich, Hill states, "Lack of persistence is one of the major causes of failure. Moreover, experience with thousands of people has proved that lack of persistence is a weakness common to the majority of men" (152). Hill goes on to say, "One thing we all know, if one does not possess persistence, one does not achieve noteworthy success in any calling" (155).

Anthony Robbins has built a multi-million dollar empire by teaching people to be successful. His "Ultimate Success Formula" is the essence of tenacity. First, the tenacious must define a goal. Second, they take action to achieve the goal. Finally, they notice if what they are doing is working or not, and adapt their approach until they reach their goal (Robbins, 11).

The value of tenacity is proven repeatedly in various success stories. Colonel Sanders, the founder of KFC, did not begin creating a chicken franchise until he was a sixty-five years old retiree. Deeming his Social Security checks too small, he looked for something he could do to bring in more money. He had a great chicken recipe and believed a restaurant would use his recipe and give him a percent of the profits from the recipe. It was absurd to assume a restaurant would share profits with someone else when they already have a chicken recipe they can use for free. In fact, the idea was not an easy sell, but Sanders would not give up on his idea. He was turned down one thousand nine times before a restaurant made a deal with him. Had he stopped at ten, or one hundred, or even one thousand rejections he would not have reaped the rewards from his not-so-crazy idea (Robbins, 13-14).

Sylvester Stallone who wanted desperately to break into acting also exhibited tenacity. He was rejected repeatedly and was told he would never be an actor because it was difficult to understand him when he spoke. Instead of giving up, Stallone wrote the movie Rocky. Again, he faced rejection. Eventually, a producer agreed to buy the rights to Rocky for \$256,000 as long as Stallone was not the star. The money could have gone a long way for Stallone, but it would not have fulfilled his dream. Instead, he agreed to

\$75,000 and ten percent of the net profits so he could be the star. Through his tenacity, Stallone attained his dream of fame (Plaskin, 20).

I have found that tenacity alone does not guarantee success and many times the tenacious lose, but there is something to be gained by not giving up. I spent over three years trying to solve a puzzle called The Merlin Mystery. The puzzle resembled a children's book with the solution to be found in the text and illustrations. The first to solve the puzzle would receive \$125,000 and a wand worth \$25,000. I labored at least two hours everyday on that puzzle. I scanned every page of the book into my computer and manipulated the data in the hopes of finding the answer. I bought additional copies of the book, cut out the pages, and covered a hallway wall with the pages in an attempt to find a pattern. I went through periods of thinking I was on the verge of success only to discover I had found nothing. I did not win nor did anyone else before the deadline. In fact, after the author revealed the solution, many were jaded, as it seems there was not enough information to have ever solved the puzzle.

After that, I could not help but feel I had wasted a great deal of my time traveling down a dead-end. But I have to admit that I have gained from giving my all and not giving up. I have gained a tremendous amount of discipline, and the ability to hold nothing back as I pursue my goals. These gifts have helped me as I confront the challenges of school.

Currently, I am among the top students in all my classes. However, tenacity makes no promises that I will stay at the top of my classes. Though tenacity may not always be good enough to pass tests or classes, it does guarantee that I will give my absolute best, and it will see me through any failure I must endure. Most important, as long as I remain tenacious, tenacity promises that I will receive my degree.

The French scientist Louis Pasteur sums up tenacity best with his quote, "Let me tell you the secret which has led me to the goal. My only strength resides in my tenacity." (Dubos, 63). Ultimately, the level of one's tenacity determines the level of success one achieves in life. Whether it is because of faith, love, or a deep sense of purpose, people that have tenacity will live a more fulfilling life than those that collapse at every obstacle.

### **Works Cited**

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