

*Diligence/  
Stick to it*

That which we  
learn to do well  
makes life  
worthwhile

“Success is not  
measured by the  
height attained, but  
by the obstacles  
overcome.”

~Unknown~



## November Character Connection Theme: Diligence: "Stick-to-it"



### Definitions

**Diligence** is the long steady application to one's occupation or studies, persistent effort, assiduity, attentive care, or heedfulness.<sup>1</sup> A diligent person works on an assignment even when the task is longer or harder than usual. He finishes his chores, even when friends interrupt. He works on a skill, even if he can not do it the first time he tries. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) said, "Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance."<sup>2</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> century Hesiod noted, "Diligence increaseth the fruit of toil. A dilatory man wrestles with losses."<sup>3</sup> Proverbs from many cultures extol the virtues of diligence. Three such Chinese proverbs are: "Diligence is the basis of wealth, and thrift the source of riches." "The best strategy in life is diligence." "Great riches come from heaven; small riches come from diligence."<sup>4</sup>

- \*Persevere: keep trying!
- \*Finish the task.
- \*Make consistent effort.
- \*Let obstacles be stepping stones to success.

### Quotes

"Success is not measured by the height attained, but by the obstacles overcome." --Unknown<sup>5</sup>

"We can do anything we want to do if we stick to it." <sup>6</sup>

"Some people see things as they are and say 'Why?' I dream of things that never were and say 'Why not?'"  
--Robert Kennedy <sup>7</sup>

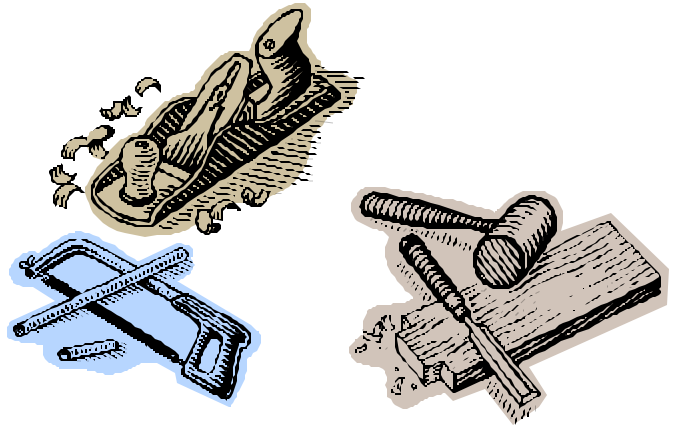
"The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools."  
--Confucius<sup>8</sup>

### **Stick to Your Task**

(Author Unknown)

Stick to your task till it sticks to you;  
Beginners are many, but enders are few.  
Honor, power, place and praise  
Will always come to the one who stays.

Stick to your task till it sticks to you;  
Bend at it, sweat at it, smile at it too;  
For out of the bend and the sweat and the smile  
Will come life's victories, after awhile.



### Activities

\*\*Make a time capsule to be opened at the end of the year. Have each class member include one or two goals that he or she will be working on during the year. Include class member samples of handwriting, math assignments, or art. When the time capsule is opened, celebrate growth and successes.

\*\*Stage a "Diligence Show," emphasizing talents that have taken time to perfect. (Even riding a bicycle is a skill that was diligently acquired!) Have class members calculate the number of hours spent in acquiring the talent displayed. Then, they can estimate the number of hours required to be a professional in their talent area.

<sup>1</sup> from The American Heritage Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> The Quotations Page, <http://www.quotationspage.com/search.php3?homesearch=diligence>, accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>3</sup> 8444. Hesiod, <http://www.bartleby.com/100/692.19.html>, Accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>4</sup> Bartleby.com, Accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>5</sup> Lindon Character Connection Character School Calendar 1998-1999

<sup>6</sup> From quotes compiled for Provo's PACE

<sup>7</sup> From quotes compiled for Provo's PACE

<sup>8</sup> TPCN-Great Quotations, [http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes\\_diligence.html](http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_diligence.html), Accessed October 5, 2002

Have students work with parents to calculate how many hours of training were required for the parent's job. Students can also discuss with parents how "diligence" relates to getting and keeping a job.

**\*\*Plant a seed and grow a flower to give to someone you respect (December's Character Connection theme is Respect.)** Talk about the diligence required in growing a plant as well as acquiring a talent or character trait.

**\*\*Popping Nickel Demonstration:** Need: 1 wet nickel, 16 oz. thoroughly chilled (freezer works well) vinegar bottle with a narrow mouth (Heinz brand works well.) Place the wet nickel on the mouth of the thoroughly chilled bottle. (The water on the nickel should form a seal on the bottle's mouth.) Place warm hands around the jar. As the air in the bottle warms, the nickel will "pop." *Just as the popping nickel performs according to the degree of coldness of the bottle, so does success in areas of talent happen according to the diligence given. Many experiments take time and diligence in following instructions. Sometimes experiments don't work the first time and sometimes they need to be modified to circumstances. Success in life, too, requires that "stick-to-it-till-the-job-is-done" attitude.*

**\*\*As a class, memorize a poem such as "Don't Quit" by Jill Wolf**

Don't quit when the tide is lowest,  
For it's just about to turn;  
Don't quit over doubts and questions,  
For there's something you may learn.

Don't quit when the night is darkest,  
For it's just a while 'til dawn;  
Don't quit when you've run the farthest,  
For the race is almost won.

Don't quit when the hill is steepest,  
For your goal is almost nigh;  
Don't quit, for you're not a failure  
Until you fail to try.



## Stories

### **"The Impossible Takes Longer"**

A September 1998 New Utah! Newspaper Supplement (page 1 and 14) article by Donna Cooper was entitled, "Achieving the impossible." The subheading said, "Art Berg has learned that some miracles we create, while others take time. . ." The article described a young and athletic Art who enjoyed sports including skiing and raquetball. After a terrible car accident, he became paralyzed from the chest down. The prognosis was grim, yet Art determined to find a successful and healthy way of life. He studied and worked, finally regaining some strength. Soon he married and now has two children. He speaks to many groups and organizations on "The Impossible Takes Longer." He has also written Some Miracles Take Time and Finding Peace in Troubled Waters. In 1993 he set a world record as the first quadriplegic to race over 325 miles in seven days. He is the team captain of a full contact rugby team.

*Many people have obstacles in their lives. Some are great and some are small. Obstacles can be physical, mental, or social. Some difficulties can be seen by others, some are known only to an intimate few. No matter what the obstacle, it is the diligence and effort to overcome that counts.*



### **Aesop's Fable: The Crow and the Watering Can**

There once was a very thirsty crow. It had not rained in a long time, and no water could be found anywhere. Even the nearby stream had dried up. In his search for water, the crow spied a watering can. To his joy, he saw that it had a small amount of water in it. Unfortunately, the water was too far down for him to reach with his beak. After great thought, the crow spied a pebble nearby. He grabbed the pebble in his beak and dropped it in the can. The water rose ever so slightly. However, after many pebbles the water level was high enough for the crow to get his drink of water.

*Many small efforts produce great results.*



### **Apolo Anton Ohno**

In the 2002 Winter Olympics, Apolo Ohno was leading the 1000 meter race. As he was heading into the final lap of the race, he and 3 other skaters crashed. The Australian competitor skated past the crash to be the

victor.<sup>9</sup> Ohno crawled across the finish line to win the silver medal. The next Wednesday, with six stitches, Ohno skated the 1500 meter race. For much of the 13 ½ laps, he was one of the last, yet he brought the crowd to their feet when he passed all but the defending world champion, Kim. With a burst of speed, Ohno moved to pass Kim. Kim blocked his attempt, but was later disqualified and Ohno was awarded the gold medal.<sup>10</sup>

*Benjamin Franklin said, "Diligence is the mother of good luck."<sup>11</sup>*

## **Writing or Discussion Topics**

**\*\*In 1922, after a 10-year search, Howard Carter discovered King Tut's tomb. *Talk about how some goals may take longer than expected to realize. Think of an attained goal and the steps taken to reach it. Were there some unexpected obstacles or help?***

**\*\*Casey gets up every morning a half hour before breakfast to practice typing. *Why would he do that? What are the advantages to doing a ½ hour each day instead of 3 hours only on Saturdays? Benjamin Disraeli said, "The secret of success is constancy of purpose."<sup>12</sup> What projects are best done a little at a time? What projects are best done in one large block of time?***

**\*\* It is said that Thomas Edison's light bulb was a success on the 1152<sup>nd</sup> try.<sup>13</sup> *Why did Edison keep trying after 1000 failures? What would have happened had he stopped after 1151 tries?***

**\*\*Theodore Roosevelt said, "It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat; who strives valiantly; who errs and may fail again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who does know the great enthusiasm, the great devotion; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat." *Why is it better to have tried and failed than to have never tried at all? What part does diligence play with success?***

## **Role Plays**

**\*\*Susan is supposed to practice the piano right after school. However, on Monday, Reeta asked her to play jump rope. Tuesday was piano lessons. On Wednesday Susan stayed after school for the chess club. On Thursday she worked on her map assignment that was due on Friday. Friday was Karen's 3:30 birthday party. *How can Susan be more diligent in achieving her goal of someday performing Malaguena on the piano?***

**\*\*The teacher has given a creative writing assignment due on Friday. The paper needs to be 3 pages of good handwriting. Most afternoons, John is also very busy after school with basketball and an afternoon paper route. It is Monday, yet John knows that he has a free afternoon for study on Thursday with only ½ hour of free time on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. *What strategy should John use to diligently prepare?***

**\*\*Again Annie has not been asked to join in the soccer game during recess. Alone, she stands and watches the game wondering if she has any friends at all. *What should Annie do? What part does diligence play in changing Annie's situation?***

## **Book List**

Whistle for Willy by Ezra Jack Keats. Viking, 1964

Lou Gehrig, The Luckiest Man by David A. Adler, illustrated by Terry Widener. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1997

Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss

Mush! Across Alaska in the World's Largest Sled-Dog Race by Patricia Seibert, illus. by Jan Davey Ellis. The Millbrook Press, 1992

Amber on the Mountain by Tony Johnston, illustrated by Robert Duncan. Dial, 1994

More Than Anything Else by Marie Bradby, illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet. Orchard Books, 1995

The Children's book of Virtues edited by William J. Bennett, illustrated by Michael Hague. Simon & Schuster, 1995 "Try, Try Again," (page 9), "Persevere," (page 10), "It Can Be Done" (page 11), "The Little Hero of Holland" (page 12), "The Tortoise and the Hare" (page 19), "The Stars in the Sky" (page 20)



**DECEMBER: Respect**

**JANUARY: Generosity**

**FEBRUARY: Caring**

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<sup>9</sup> Biography, <http://latishahensley.tripod.com/apoloantonohno/id1.html>, accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>10</sup> MSNBC News, <http://msnbc.com/news/712451.asp>, Accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>11</sup> TPCN-Great Quotations, [http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes\\_diligence.html](http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_diligence.html), Accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>12</sup> Quotez, <http://www.quotations.co.uk/>, Accessed October 5, 2002

<sup>13</sup> Decker, Neil W. What's the Object, Vol 11, Bountiful, Utah: Publisher's Book Sales, 1986, page 61



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Character Connection: Diligence

1. SFSESATNEADT \_\_\_\_\_  
moral connotation, implies unswerving adherence to principles, usually in the face of opposition
2. ASNEEVCREREP \_\_\_\_\_  
continuing strength or patience in dealing with something arduous, withstanding difficulty or resistance
3. RSIESETPENC \_\_\_\_\_  
dogged resolve in dealing with others, often a willful insistence
4. CTEIYATN \_\_\_\_\_  
tough, aggressive persistence, accents willpower, holding onto something
5. SDTEAY \_\_\_\_\_  
continuity of activity, regularity of movement or behavior, or the manifestation of firmness or self-control
6. RUEEND \_\_\_\_\_  
carry on through, despite hardships, undergo, to bear with tolerance
7. AYUSITDSI \_\_\_\_\_  
close and constant application, unflagging effort
8. IBDEA \_\_\_\_\_  
resignation and forbearance
9. SADFSMETA \_\_\_\_\_  
fixed or unchanging, firmly loyal or constant, unswerving
10. TIREPTNSES \_\_\_\_\_  
refusing to give up or let go
11. ONSATTCN \_\_\_\_\_  
continually recurring, unchanging in nature, value, or extent
12. IEDILENGC \_\_\_\_\_  
long, steady applications to one's occupation
13. UTIIRDUONSS \_\_\_\_\_  
diligently active, assiduous in work or study
14. TASN \_\_\_\_\_  
resoluteness of spirit

diligence
persistent
perseverance
persistence
tenacity
steadfastness
endure
stand
abide
assiduity
constant
steady
steadfast
industrious

"What we hope ever to do with ease we must learn first to do with diligence."

—Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

*"He who labors diligently need never despair; for all things are accomplished by diligence and labor."*

—Menander (342 BC-292 BC)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Quotations Page, <http://www.quotationspage.com/search.php3?homesearch=diligence>, accessed October 5, 2002