

CHARACTER



Steadfastness

September 2003

**STEAFASTNESS: fixed or unchanging, firmly loyal or constant unswerving, faithful.
Being steadfast includes completing the task, finishing projects that are difficult, and challenging oneself with a new goal.**

**“.....The slogan ‘Press On’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”
Calvin Coolidge**

“Be steadfast as a tower that doth not bend its stately summit to the tempest’s shock.” —Dante Alighieri

“Faithfulness or devotion to a person, a cause, obligations, or duties” —Roget’s Thesaurus
In a time of showy excess, where some will bend nearly any rule for a brief moment of notoriety or a fleeting phase of popularity, the virtue of steadfastness may seem out of style. It places at least as much importance on the mundane as on the ostentatious, and it demands that principles have priority over self. Yet, in spite of its lack of flashiness, even today we find steadfastness at the core of happiness and success. It is not that it has become unimportant in today’s world; rather, it has perhaps become more important because it has become less common.

Steadfastness refers to the quality of holding steady, even to the end. But it is more than diligence, persistence, or the like because it implies steadiness guided by loyalty to someone or by commitment to faith, high principles, and moral purpose. A steadfast person is one with deep commitment that guides everyday action. It is the source of trust, because a steadfast person is predictable. It leads to accomplishment, because a steadfast person has guiding goals and is unwavering in the path to them. It leads to happiness, because a steadfast person accepts the highs and lows of life, knowing his duties and his purpose. It allows other virtues to shine and achieve their potential because they become genuine and guide daily actions. This is what President Theodore Roosevelt meant when he sought to inspire the nation to be steadfast in their commitment to common virtues:

“Though conditions have grown puzzling in their complexity, though changes have been vast, yet we may remain absolutely sure of one thing; that now as ever in the past, and as it will ever be in-the future, there can be no substitute for elemental virtues, for the

elemental qualities to which we allude when we speak of a man, not only as a good man, but as emphatically a man. We can build up the standard of individual citizenship and individual well-being, we can raise the national standard and make it what it can and shall be made, only by each of us steadfastly keeping in mind that there can be no substitute for the world-old commonplace qualities of truth, justice, and courage, thrift, industry, common sense and genuine sympathy with the fellow feelings of others.” [emphasis added]

To be steady is by definition continuous, day after day. By being rooted in the common, steadfastness may come to be taken for granted, although at times a tragic circumstance highlights its value. For example, we often give little thought to the devotion of a pet, but when we hear of lost animals traveling great distances to return to beloved owners (as characterized in movies like *Incredible Journey* and *Homeward Bound*), we take heart and are uplifted. In times of trouble we turn to the steadfast person as an anchor, such as during World War II, when Britain found hope and direction from the resolute purpose of Winston Churchill, as did America from the determined and confident Franklin D. Roosevelt. In my own work with the mentally ill, I am occasionally inspired by the steadfastness of a few, who overcome a common outcome of fear and defeat, instead finding purpose in spite of their limitations. By their steady commitment to principle, duty, and others, they find happiness and bless others. Such constancy of purpose is even a virtue given to God (Psalms 118: 1-4) and which he asks of us (I Corinthians 15:58).

Bruce Carpenter
Lindon Resident
BYU Psychology Professor

“The harder you work,
the luckier you get.”
M. Alexander

“Diamonds are nothing
more than chunks of coal
that stuck to their jobs.”
Malcolm Forbes

“We aim above the mark
to hit the mark.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Book List

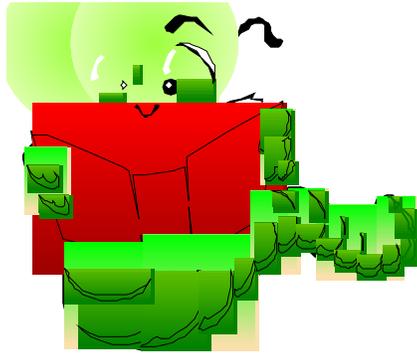
"Amber on the Mountain"
by Tony Johnston

"Whistle for Willie"
by Ezra Jack Keats

"Lou Gehrig, The Luckiest Man"
by David A. Adler

"Horton Hatches the Egg"
by Dr. Seuss

"Mush! Across Alaska in the World's Longest Sled-Dog Race"
by Patricia Seibert



“One great source of failure is found in a lack of concentration of purpose. There will be adverse winds in every voyage, but the able seaman firmly resists their influence, while he takes advantage of every favorable breeze to speed him on his course. So in our aims and pursuits we shall find much to counteract them, much to draw our attention from them, and, unless we are armed with a steadfast purpose, that can subordinate the lesser to the greater, that can repel hindrances, resist attractions, and bend circumstances to our will, our efforts will not be crowned with success”

—Author unknown

Family Activities

–**Work a jigsaw puzzle together.** Talk about the small pieces and individual efforts that fit together to form a beautiful whole picture. Compare the pieces to a talented professional’s practice sessions.

–**Make popsicles.** Talk about why steadfastly pursuing a project till the end is just as important as leaving the liquid in the freezer until it is frozen.

–**Jane Addams**, American social worker and reformer, was born September 6, 1860. She organized civic groups to pressure legislatures and officials for reform. She was instrumental in giving women the right to vote, and passing child labor laws. *What does steadfastness have to do with social reform?*

By Laura Clement

Kid’s Corner

William G. Scott once said, “Steadfastness is to be firmly fixed in place, to be like a rock, and strong in our beliefs. Not the strongest wind or the biggest wave can shake your faith.” Stand up in every way for what you believe in, no matter what it is. Peer pressure is very real and alive in the life of a teen today. I know that we must be very strong and unshaken. One mistake can keep us from so many opportunities that we would otherwise have. It is also important to dream, set your dreams high and believe that you can achieve. No matter how many times you fall, get back up and give it your all.

Sarah Peterson
Pleasant Grove High School
Grade 12

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials this year by using the web site located at www.thecharacterconnection.com. If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to arlainea@isquaredinc.com

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