

CHARACTER

Dedication/Determination

September 2008

DEDICATION: "is the state of being committed to a particular course of thought or action. It is focusing your energy and efforts on a task and sticking with it until it is done. A dedicated person uses his willpower to do something even when it isn't easy."

"The concentration and dedication - the intangibles are the deciding factors between who won and who lost." - Tom Seaver

Goodness is the only investment that never fails. – Henry David Thoreau.

For one to understand and live a life of dedication and determination, one must be able to show goodness to his fellow men. We all need to choose wisely and make the choices in our lives of what we want to commit ourselves to and then become determined to make it happen. We have heard the phrase "do it now" and many more of the same type of thoughts. However, none of these great phrases can change lives unless we change our inner self.

I find that nature is often our greatest teacher. We have learned industry from the ant and grace from the swan. However, the greatest lesson that nature has to offer is that of the bamboo tree. For the first four years, the bamboo tree develops an effective root system underground, without growing more than a few inches above the ground. Then, in the fifth year, the bamboo tree grows 80 feet! Our personal life is very similar. We see people who achieve so much in what we might view as a very short time without realizing the efforts that they have put in the past to build firm foundations.

If we spend time investing in ourselves, learning patiently, we would be surprised at just how much we can grow. This is the action of taking real steps in our lives to learn the basics and get our roots solid. No great quotes or thoughts will make this happen, only action. This is your start to determination.

There is a legend in Ancient Greece that a tourist, upon arriving in Athens, asked directions to Mount Olympus from Socrates. Socrates looked at him and told him to turn right and just take step after step until he reached his destination.

In life there are very few things we can control. The only things that we can control, in fact, are our dreams, our goals and our ambitions.

It is essential to be rigid in our determination as well as flexible in approach. In order to succeed we must follow Socrates' advice and stick to the path, not knowing how long or hard it is. But thus we have created a step in establishing our dedication to accomplishing the task.

Just by consciously accepting that the destination is controllable but the journey is not, most of our problems will dissolve.

The Five Steps To Dedication: When Sir John Hunt stood at the foot of Mount Everest, he did not expect to reach its summit by some magic trick or in one giant leap. Hunt had mapped his climb by stages, one day at a time. Each day he ascended as high as he had planned for that day. The day Hillary and Tensing finally stepped up to the summit was the climax of many days, and the last step was the top one of many climbing steps.

What you are setting out to do may not be as spectacular or arduous as climbing Mount Everest, but you apply the same principles. There is no magic or sudden high-speed leap in time; no, it is you taking one step at a time.

Here are the five steps you must use to take your first steps.

1. Make Sure You Want It - Really Want It.

- Pinpoint your reasons for wanting it.
- Sell yourself on the importance of each point.

2. Believe You Can Do It.

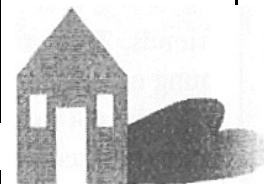
- Put past failures behind you.
- Build up your self esteem.

3. Take Just One Step At A Time.

- Plan for just the next five minutes.
- Then the next hour, day, week, etc.

4. Put Yourself On The Spot.

- Make the decisions to overcome weakness and temptations.
- Tell others what you are doing.



*"A jug fills drop by drop."
—Buddha*

*"I am a slow walker, but I never walk backwards."
—Abraham Lincoln*

*"Character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries."
—James Michener*

Book List

“Drawing Lessons from a Bear”

by David McPhail

“Mush!”

by Patricia Feibert

“Amazing Grace”

by May Hoffman

“Honk”

by Pamela Duncan
Edwards

“Snowflake Bentley”

by Jacqueline Briggs
Martin



--Write it down.

--Set deadlines.

5. Achieve Through Creating A Great Habit

--Make the change become a good habit by repetition.

--Watch the habit grow and you will become more determined to succeed.

This is the start to taking the steps in becoming dedicated to making your life a value to you and to others. You can now prove to yourself that you can develop the willpower to do what you set your heart on doing. Remember when your life has determination, others around you will see the difference and they, themselves, will become desirous to improve. One expression I have applied in my life is very simple but has been very meaningful for me. It is merely that life is but a weaving and what we weave we have to wear. I would like to share this one last thought by Swami Chinmayananda: “Be a noble person in life. The tide of circumstances and the tussle of happenings may toss us hither and thither, may buffet us up and down, but stay noble in your thoughts and actions.”

Gilbert Howe

Lindon Resident

(Reprint of Article from 2004 Lindon Character Connection)

Family Activities

–Make a cake together. About 10 minutes after the cake is in the oven, discuss the result of taking the cake out before it is done.

–Try following a straight line while looking through the wrong end of binoculars. Talk about the importance of focus in accomplishing a project.

–The French Statesman, Marquis de Lafayette, was born on September 6, 1757. He was devoted to freedom. Not only did he fight in the American Revolutionary War, but Lafayette was also a leader in the early part of the French Revolution. He fought for the cause of independence and reform in Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Poland, and the South American republics. His dedication to liberty cost him his fortune and social position. However, his actions won him the respect of freedom loving people.

By Laura Clement

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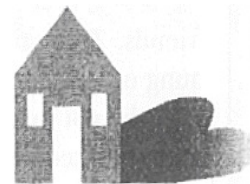
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