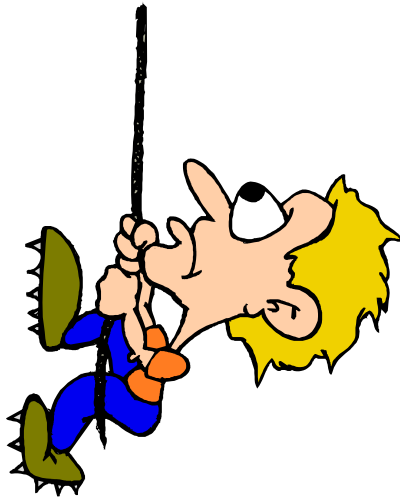


Perseverance

Commitment to Excellence



10 Topics
36+ Lessons
on
Perseverance



Character Ed Tools' Vision

Empowering students to stand on a foundation of character so they may act responsibly when faced with difficult decisions.

Character Ed Tools 

**15709 Arrow Highway, #2
Irwindale, CA 91706
626-960-6922**

**www.characteredtools.com
info@characteredtools.com**

Building a Foundation of Character

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Perseverance

A Character Ed Tools Program

Table of Contents

How To Use This Perseverance Program

Daily Reflections On Perseverance



Lesson #1What Is Perseverance?



Lesson #2Persevere for Your Health



Lesson #3Persevere at Home



Lesson #4Persevering at School



Lesson #5Persevere to Keep Commitments



Lesson #6Overcoming Obstacles



Lesson #7Prepared to Persevere



Lesson #8Persevering with Bullies



Lesson #9Perseverance for the Environment



Lesson #10Commitment to Excellence

Bibliography

How To Use This Character Ed Tools Program

Overview

When you fail or fall short of your expectations, do you summon the energy from within to get back up and try again? When others are critical of your performance, do you press on? When circumstances beyond your control press down on you, do you keep moving towards your goal? To reach our goals and dreams, it takes a never-give-up attitude, it takes a commitment to excellence, it takes perseverance.

This perseverance program is designed to help students develop their ability to recognize and overcome obstacles. They will be encouraged to see these challenges as positive growing experiences that give them new talents and insights into what they can and cannot do. They'll discover that achieving excellence in their lives takes time, hard work, patience, and persistence.

This program will motivate students to ignore the negative criticisms of those around them. It will give them skills to use when they encounter bullies or the pressures to smoke or use drugs and alcohol. They'll discover that difficult circumstances and failures work to help them improve and achieve excellence in their lives.

This perseverance program will help you present the character quality of perseverance to your students in an interesting and thought-provoking way. We have broken up perseverance into ten lessons with tons of ideas to get you and your students talking. We are excited about the opportunities you will have to help guide your students to learn how to persist, and drive with determination to achieve goals. Most of all, have loads of fun and enjoy talking about this significant character quality of perseverance.

Daily Reflections On Perseverance

We have provided you with an opening comment on each lesson. Our vision is for the entire school to participate in learning more about perseverance. With that in mind, we wrote these daily reflections on perseverance as an announcement that could be given over the school intercom for ten days. If only your class is going through this book, a great way to reinforce the messages on perseverance is to begin or end your class period reading these daily statements. Also, these reflections could be a reminder for you to use with the students, weeks after you've ended your lessons on perseverance. However you decide to use them, I'm sure you'll find these statements are filled with great thought-provoking comments.

Lessons 1 Through 10

There are ten different topics on perseverance. The lessons under each topic contains tons of interesting insights and thoughts to get your students talking for hours and hours on end about perseverance. Okay, maybe we're exaggerating a bit but this will get your students talking.

Activities

This program contains multiple activities for each lesson. Use as many of these ideas as time or resources permits. Our goal is simply to get your students talking, thinking, and acting on what they think and have learned about perseverance.

The Lessons

Each lesson is packed with thought-provoking content to get your students talking. An interesting comment is then followed by open class discussion. We think you'll find it fun to see what your students think perseverance means and how their actions model perseverance and the drive for excellence.

Tip for the teacher:

Please remember that calling on students to verbally respond to any question from this program puts that student on the spot. The resulting tension can lead to a rushed response, a wild guess or simply no response at all.

Please give students 10-15 seconds between asking a question and asking a student to respond. This gives them time to formulate an answer. Help each student feel involved and encourage the others to practice good citizenship when listening to another student's responses.

Biographies, Historical Data, and Poems

We thought you could use some real examples of people, historical events, and poems that demonstrate perseverance in quite different ways. With each lesson you'll find a whole bunch of data on a real person, an event, or a poem demonstrating perseverance.

Worksheets

Several worksheets are provided for each lesson to get your students' feedback as they reflect on what they have learned.

Some Legal Thoughts

Copyrights and all that jazz. You know the drill. These lessons are owned by Character Ed Tools, so don't copy them. If you want more books or a license to use this program school-wide, just give us a yell, we've got solutions. But when it comes to those worksheets? Copy tons of the worksheets (well, perhaps not tons since we are supposed to be saving trees, but you get the idea). Let's get those students writing and reflecting on what they have learned. And most important of all, let's have fun learning about perseverance!

Daily Reflections On Citizenship

LESSON 1: WHAT IS PERSEVERANCE?

Perseverance = steady and continued action or belief usually over a long period of time and especially despite difficulties or setbacks.

The Underground Railroad was a secret operation that began during the colonial period but reached its peak during the movement to abolish slavery from 1830-1865. The Underground Railroad involved a network of people and places used to help slaves travel from the slave states in the South to free states in the North. The Underground Railroad is symbolic of the American Dream. Men and women of all races persevered over a long period of time, despite difficulties and setbacks to pursue life, liberty, and freedom.

LESSON 2: PERSEVERE FOR YOUR HEALTH

Eating a healthy diet will improve how you look and feel. It will improve how well you do in school and how well you perform in sports. We need to persevere at strengthening our minds and bodies by diligently exercising and eating healthy. We may not feel the benefits right away but today we are planting seeds for who we will be tomorrow.

LESSON 3: PERSEVERE AT HOME

Please, thank-you, or your welcome, words we easily use when greeting or helping a stranger. But too often, those words don't even come to mind when we are interacting with those in our family. Let's decide to change that. Let's decide to be committed to building better relationships with those closest to us.

LESSON 4: PERSEVERING AT SCHOOL

The Pittsburgh Steeler's head football coach, Chuck Knoll, once said, "Everyone will get beat sometime physically but a champion seldom gets beat mentally." Our failures or losses don't define who we are. They simply test or measure how we are doing at that moment in time. We can and are able to learn, achieve and excel. Everyday has new opportunities with new challenges to help us learn, grow, and achieve to become the best we can be.

LESSON 5: PERSEVERE TO KEEP COMMITMENTS

Josh Billings said, "Consider the postage stamp; its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing until it gets there."

Every day we have some type of commitment to keep. Our desire to keep those commitments can be challenged when adversity strikes, when we feel discouraged or when the competition for

our time, energy, abilities and attention becomes intense. At times like that we need realign ourselves with why we are to keep those commitments and persevere. Learning the importance and benefits of persevering to keep those commitments will help us achieve our goals in life.

LESSON 6: OVER-COMING OBSTACLES

Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

The obstacles we encounter in life will test our resolve to continue and persevere. The belief in our abilities to attain our goals despite our failures will drive us towards success. John D Rockefeller said, "I do not think there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature." You can achieve. Persevere and believe.

LESSON 7: PREPARED TO PERSEVERE

Confucius said, "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart."

Everyone has some natural skills and abilities. We refine and sharpen those skills and abilities by practicing, rehearsing, and using them. The enjoyment we will have tomorrow will depend on how well we have prepared, sharpened and refined our skills and abilities today.

LESSON 8: PERSEVERING WITH BULLIES

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 9:11 "The race is not [always] to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." General Eisenhower summarized it this way, ""What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight - it's the size of the fight in the dog." We will encounter bullies who are bigger and stronger than we are but that doesn't mean we are defeated. We can use the resources we have available to us to overcome the challenges of the bully.

LESSON 9: PERSEVERANCE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Rachel Carson said, "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." She found strength to fight for the environment by simply looking at all the beauty she saw in the environment. We too can find strength to persevere when we look at our goal and focus on what we plan to achieve rather than focusing on what we may lose.

LESSON 10: COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Conrad Hilton said, "Success seems to be connected with action. Successful men keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit." Let's remain committed to achieving excellence in our lives in everything we do and say. Let's persevere and work hard at becoming the best we can be.

What Is Perseverance?

Lesson #1

Objective:

To get your students talking about what it means to persevere.

Lesson:

Perseverance is at the heart of every obstacle we will face. It's the steady and continued action or beliefs we have that drives us forward to reach our goals. It's not a short race. Perseverance is demonstrated over a long period of time. It takes hard work and determination to carry on despite the difficulties or setbacks we may encounter. One of the greatest feelings in life is that of having persevered through a difficult situation and come out victorious.

Set The Stage #1: What is Perseverance?

Activity:

Time: 15 Minutes

Materials: Dictionary

Have the students look up the definitions for the following terms:

Perseverance

Encourage

Discouragement

Obstacle

Frustration

Anger

The Greek Words - Mathos and Pathos

Discuss times in our lives when we have experienced each of these terms. If time permits have the students create skits acting out each of these words and how they can relate them to perseverance.



Discussion:

Per — se — ver—ance : steady and continued action or belief usually over a long period and especially despite difficulties or setbacks.

Everyone has a goal. A direction they wish to travel. A destination to achieve. The goal may simply be to relax, it could be a new video game, or perhaps a new bike or car. In order to have something new, we must expand our current abilities or resources. The bigger the new thing, the greater the change we must make in our lives. That expansion, that change in our lives may come with pain and it won't always be easy.

“Do what you’ve always done, be what you’ve always been.”

For example, lifting weights seems like a terrible waste of time, a lot of work, and unnecessary pain, but lifting weights makes you strong enough to fulfill the goals you do want to achieve. You persevere at lifting weights to reach your goal. If you give up when the going gets difficult, then you won't achieve your objective.

When people don't understand that being uncomfortable is part of the process of achievement, they use the discomfort as a reason not to do it. When they do that, well, they don't get what they want. Perseverance is the driving force in our efforts to reach our goals and dreams. We must learn to tolerate the discomfort, focus on our goal, and reach for that inner determination in order to grow.

1. A lot of people talk about doing new things but never do them. Why would they talk about it but not get up and do something to achieve it? What's holding them back from reaching for their dreams?
2. Okay, we're moving. We're reaching for our dreams and trying something new. But then things get a little difficult and we quit. Talk about a time you did this and why you did it.
3. Describe a sudden change in your life you decided to make and the difficulties you faced in achieving that goal. How did you feel when you finally reached your goal?



What is Perseverance?

Lesson #1 – Worksheet for Stage #1

- 1) Write about a time you decided to pursue a goal and ending up quitting.

- 2) What stopped you?

- 3) Write about a time you decided to pursue a goal and later achieved it.

- 4) How did you feel when you achieved it?

- 5) What did you learn from both of the situations described above?

Set The Stage #2: Dealing with Frustration

Activity:

Time: 10 Minutes

Materials: Three Decks of Playing Cards

Divide the class into three groups. Give each group a deck of cards and ask them to build a house of cards four stories high. Give them about five minutes to build the house of cards.

How well did the groups do at building the houses of cards?

What frustrations did they feel?

What difficulties did they encounter?

Did everyone participate or did only a few try? Why?

Talk about the feelings we have when asked to do something like this. What actions did each person in the group take to help achieve the goal and how did those actions help or frustrate the group's efforts?

Discussion:

Frustration occurs when our goal seems unreachable. The goal is important to us but we seem to have exhausted ourselves in our attempts to achieve it. When we feel frustrated, we can become irritable, annoyed, rejected, disappointed, and angry. At times like that we might lash out and hit the wall, kick a chair, bully others, or worse yet hurt someone. However, we may also internalize it and cut ourselves down, telling ourselves that "we're no good," or withdraw from attempting new things. Some may even try to escape by using drugs or alcohol to numb the pain.

When we fail or are frustrated with our abilities to achieve, we need to step back and take a break, and evaluate what we are doing or attempting. Do we have enough information? Have we considered other options? Take a look at the big picture. Is what I'm attempting reasonable? Can I get help?

Most of the time when we hit that frustration point, we've been going around in circles attempting to succeed and failing again and again. We may need to be prepared to go back and start over again from scratch. Or perhaps the goal is simply unrealistic and unattainable. It's maybe time to re-evaluate the goal, modify the goal, or set a new goal.

1. Have the students talk about a moment of frustration they have encountered and



Lesson #1
What Is Perseverance?

how they dealt with it.

2. Discuss how frustration can lead to bully-type activity.
3. What are some positive things we can do to deal with our frustrations? What are different ways to express ourselves at those time?

“A life of frustration is inevitable for any coach whose main enjoyment is winning.”

Chuck Noll

“Fundamentally, all writing is about the same thing; it’s about dying, about the brief flicker of time we have here, and the frustration that it creates.”

Mordecai Richler

Dealing with Frustration

Lesson #1 – Worksheet for Stage #2

Steps to Dealing with Frustration:

Take your time and try to relax

Step back from the problem you are encountering

Take a deep breath

You may need to take a break, go for a walk, get a drink of water

Get feedback or think about what your failures have told you

Analyze the information you have

Consider what mistakes you could have made

Consider alternative ways to solve the problem

Get help

Ask for advice from others who have succeeded at what you're attempting

Get help to complete the task

Get help to learn more about what you are doing

Learn more about what you are trying to accomplish

Think of the big picture

Don't let this small setback cause you to lose focus on the overall goal

Why are you doing this?

Why are you attempting to do it this way?

Be prepared to start over

Starting over again can help you identify things you may have overlooked

Consider an alternative goal

Perhaps this goal is unreasonable

You've given it your best effort and now it's time to set a new course

Learn from your mistakes and apply that knowledge to help you succeed in a new direction

Set The Stage #3: Overcoming Obstacles

Activity:

Time: 10 Minutes

Material: Story of the Tortoise and the Hare

Read the story of the Tortoise and the Hare

Discuss the actions of each and why the Tortoise was victorious. What can we learn from this story?

Discussion:

One of the biggest obstacles we face in life is our belief that in order to be great, one must possess natural ability. We will never be good as long as we believe that. People with great talents and abilities have persevered to get to that level.

Michael Jordan, a super star basketball player, wasn't even good enough to make it on his local high school basketball team. Most people would have given up after such disappointment and most would have believed that there would be no point in trying again the next year, since it was obvious that they didn't possess the natural talent needed. We all know that this was not how Jordan thought about his situation. He worked extremely hard every day, practicing and asking the coach to teach him, even though he was not a member of the team. The next year, Michael made the team and went on to eventually become one of the world's greatest athletes of all time.

We may have some natural talent but that talent will never become great without some hard work and determination.

Sometimes it happens like this. We have great success at first but over time our progress fades. You see, we had a "natural ability" that helped us perform. At this point, we can become lazy and practice less, thinking that our greatness will somehow shine through...then it doesn't...we lose our passion and heart...and eventually give up. We have the potential to accomplish great things. But that potential is wasted if we don't learn how to persevere through the difficult times and develop those "natural abilities." Don't wait on some mystical natural ability to take you where you want to be. You must believe that with hard work and determination, you CAN do it.

1. Talk about the natural abilities we see in ourselves and those around us.



Lesson #1
What Is Perseverance?

2. Those natural abilities help to get us so far. Discuss how working hard to further those skills is necessary to achieve excellence.
3. Okay, so you don't have that natural ability. Talk about how we can still achieve success and how much work it will take.



Overcoming Obstacles

Lesson #1 – Worksheet for Stage #3

- 1) **Everyone has some natural abilities. What are two of yours?**

- 2) **What have you done to further those natural abilities?**

- 3) **Our natural abilities can only take us so far. Eventually, overcoming obstacles takes more than natural abilities. It takes hard work and determination to make it. Write about a time you had to persevere and work hard to complete an assignment.**

- 4) **List one goal you have and how you will work hard to achieve that goal. Describe how you will overcome whatever obstacles you may face.**

The Underground Railroad

1830-65

The Underground Railroad was a secret operation that began during the colonial period but reached its peak during the movement to abolish slavery from 1830-65. The Underground Railroad involved a network of people and places used to help slaves travel from the slave states in the south to free states in the North. It is a vast network of paths and roads, through swamps and over mountains, along and across rivers and even by sea to lead slaves to freedom.

The Underground Railroad operations generally relied heavily on secret codes as railroad terms. Passengers were those traveling. Conductors were those helping them find freedom. The runaways typically traveled in small groups like train cars.

Those who opposed slavery formed a political group called the abolitionists. They were in favor of getting rid of slavery in America. Not all abolitionists were in favor of aiding runaway slaves. There was a conflict in right and wrong for them. Slavery was legal but they opposed it through legal means. But several abolitionists would help runaway slaves find jobs and freedom in free states. For the runaway slave it was not easy to know who to trust as they traveled the underground railroad.

Harriet Tubman, a runaway slave, helped over 300 other slaves find freedom in the north. Abolitionist, John Parker of Ohio, frequently traveled down into Kentucky and Virginia and helped transport hundreds of slaves to freedom. The Underground Railroad had a network of people willing to help with food, water, transportation, directions, jobs, and housing. These people helped the runaway slave whenever they could along the path from where they were being held captive to where they could go and find freedom.

Southern slave owners fought back. In 1850 they passed a Fugitive Slave Act that made it both possible and profitable to hire slave catchers to find and arrest runaways. Slave catchers could venture into the free northern states and retrieve runaway slaves. The runaway slaves were no longer safe in the northern states. However, these seizures and kidnappings brought the brutality of slavery into the North and persuaded many more people to assist fugitives. Seeing this brutality motivated more whites to sympathize with the slaves and their desire to be free. And in a short time the Underground Railroad network grew even larger.

The slaves' flight to freedom was made possible and facilitated by the courageous men and women who believed in the right of all humans to be free from human bondage. Those escaping slavery and those helping them persevered to abolish slavery in America.



The Underground Railroad

Lesson #1 – Worksheet for the Underground Railroad

- 1) **What is an abolitionist?**

- 2) **What was the Underground Railroad?**

- 3) **How did the Underground Railroad help the slave?**

- 4) **Give two reasons why helping the runaway slave was the right thing to do.**

- 5) **Give two reasons why helping a runaway slave was the wrong thing to do.**

The slaves had to persevere many difficult circumstances in slavery and in their path to freedom. Likewise, many abolitionists had to persevere in knowing what they could do to help. It was difficult to know when breaking the law would be right in their minds to help another human being and when they should obey the law. The Underground Railroad is symbolic of the American dream: FREEDOM.