



DEVONHARRIS

KEEP ON PUSHING



## Persistence Devon Harris

When things go wrong as they sometimes will  
When the road you're traveling seems all uphill  
When the funds are low and the debts are high  
And you want to smile but you have to sigh  
When care is pressing you down a bit  
Rest if you must, but don't you quit

Life is queer with its twists and turns  
As every one of us sometimes learns  
And many a fellow turns about  
When he might have won had he stuck it out  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow  
You may succeed with another blow

Often the goal is nearer than  
It seems to a faint and faltering man  
Often the struggler has given up,  
When he might have captured the victor's cup  
And he learned too late when the night came down  
How close he was to the golden crown

Success is failure turned inside out  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt  
And you never can tell how close you are  
It may be near when it seems far;  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit  
It's when things go wrong that you mustn't quit

I was in the ninth grade when I first heard those words. My friend Wally Small recited them in front of the class and they had an immediate impact on me. That was the year I started running track and during practice, as I struggled through the last two hundred meters of my intervals, under the bright afternoon sun, dust swirling from the occasional light breeze traversing the field, my muscles aching from the lactic acid build up, my lungs bursting as I gasped for breath; I would repeat to myself the only words I remembered from that poem...."Give it your hardest hit but never quit." If we ever hope to realize our dreams and truly

reap the fruits of our labor, we must develop the ability to endure in the face of the challenges and adversity that life will throw our way.

Persistence does not recognize failure

Lack of persistence is one of the biggest reasons for failure. People simply give up and, in the history of the world, no one has ever been defeated until defeat was accepted as reality. As Winston Churchill said in a speech at his Alma Mater, "Never give in; never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense." Unfortunately, most people give in even before they get started. They will come up with a great idea but right away think of all the reasons why it wouldn't work - and quit.

No matter what your field of endeavor, you will always face obstacles. Things simply won't go as well as planned or expected. But if you don't quit, you may achieve your goals. Back in 1988 when our team got started we were sure that corporate sponsors would be knocking down the door to back this hot new idea. Very quickly, however, it became apparent that that wasn't going to happen. So we began selling T-shirts. You may remember them. They declared us "The hottest thing on ice!!" There were many nights that I pulled up beside a couple on the dance floor, whipping out a shirt and completing the transaction before the song was over.

Even more recently, as I prepared to compete in the 1998 Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan, I was faced with the old age problem of funding. It was January 1997 and I can still hear my coach's voice saying "Devon, if you don't get sponsorship by June, you will only be chasing pipe dreams and you should quit. Well, instead of quitting I set up training camp in Evanston, Wyoming ([www.evanstowyo.org](http://www.evanstowyo.org)) and started to coach myself. I delivered pizza at night after about eight hours of training during the day. I was experiencing major setbacks but I had found a way to keep the dream alive. June came and there was no sponsorship. July, August, September, October, November, and December came, and there was still no sponsorship. It wasn't until January, one month before the Olympics, that the Utah based long distance company, Tel America ([www.telamerica.com](http://www.telamerica.com)) came on board and provided the financial support that I needed. It all happened because I didn't quit.

Persistence denotes belief in yourself

Persistence is a very good measure of your belief in yourself. It speaks volumes of how confident you are in your ability to succeed. Only a person who is confident in their ability to succeed will persist. The more you persist, the more your confidence and your belief in yourself intensifies. That in turn increases your desire and motivation, and drives you to persist even more – which reinforces your self-esteem and belief in yourself. It is an upward spiral.

Persistence builds on itself

Persistence is the ability to endure in the face of adversity. Every single act of persistence builds and cultivates success habits which become ingrained and ultimately guarantee your success. Each act of persistence strengthens you and increases your ability to persist even more; until you become the most persistent, determined person you know. You will

simply become unstoppable. As they say "The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in not giving up."

### ***Keep on Pushing!***

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