

[PDF] You Can If You Think You Can (Personal Development)

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Description:

About the Author Norman Vincent Peale, one of the most influential clergymen of his time, is the author of forty-six books, including the international bestseller *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Dr. Peale's legacy continues today through the Peale Center for Christian Living, the Outreach Division of Guideposts, www.dailyguideposts.com/positivethinking.

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Chapter 1

THE PERSISTENCE PRINCIPLE: IT'S ALWAYS TOO SOON TO QUIT

When you have a problem, one that is especially difficult and baffling, perhaps terribly discouraging, there is one basic principle to apply and keep on applying. It is simply this -- never quit.

To give up is to invite complete defeat. And not only in connection with the matter at hand. Giving up contributes to an ultimate defeat of the personality. It tends to develop a defeat psychology.

Come at the problem a different way if the methodology you are using is not working. And if the new approach fails to go well, then come at it still another way until you do find the key to the situation. For there is a key, there always is, and continual, thoughtful, undeviating search and attack will produce it.

At luncheon I noted that a friend of mine had the habit of drawing diagrams on the white tablecloth to illustrate points he was making. He was talking about a man who had it tough but who was tougher than his problems and who, because he wouldn't quit, came through finally to a spectacular outcome.

The diagram was of a man facing an enormous mountain. "How is he going to get on the other side of that mountain?" my luncheon companion asked.

"Go around it," I replied.

"It's too wide."

"O.K., burrow under it," I offered.

"No; it's too deep. Here's the way. He rises above it mentally. If man can devise a mechanism that can fly forty thousand feet high -- above mountains -- he can come up with a type of thinking that can lift him above any mountainous difficulty."

"Bill, that is pretty ingenious, but I read that concept a long while ago. 'Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart....'"

"Yes, that's the idea," he agreed enthusiastically. "Just think, don't get emotional, and hold to the basic principle that it's always too soon to quit."

Recently I received an upbeat letter from a man who utilized this principle successfully. He told me that a few years ago he developed a prefabricated wall system for mobile homes. He organized a company and put all his money into it, but it didn't take hold, failed to move. The firm ran into one difficulty after another, so much so that his associates pleaded with him to "bury the corpse." But he would not let go.

This man is a positive thinker. He is also an individual who demonstrates the "hold on" type of faith, actually an invincible character, you might say. He believed that this difficulty need not defeat or destroy him. He said, "I refused even to entertain the thought of quitting." So he did some rational, in-depth thinking and got an idea. And you'll always get an idea if you think and don't panic. He decided to establish a line of prefabricated floor systems to go with the prefabricated wall systems. And with this he "hit the jackpot." A big company manufacturing mobile homes bought him out. Writing to tell about it, he gave me this terrific phrase: "It's always too soon to quit!"

You and I have seen repeated again and again a real tragedy. We've seen people with goals and objectives. They worked...they struggled...they thought...they prayed. But because the going was

hard, they grew tired and discouraged and finally they quit. And afterward it was often discovered that had they persevered just a little longer, had they been able to see just ahead of them, they would have found the result they sought.

NEVER TALK DEFEAT

How can you develop this nonquitting, undefeatable attitude? Well, for one thing, never talk defeat, for if you do you can actually talk yourself into acceptance of defeat. One time when I personally was having some hard going, a man on the West Coast, whom I did not know, called me on the telephone. All he said was this: "Don't you be worried and don't you give up. I am saying the Good Word for you." Before I could ask him what the Good Word was, he hung up. And I still don't know what he meant by the Good Word. But I suddenly realized I had not been saying good, hopeful words; I had been talking "down." And by that action I was actually talking myself into a defeatist attitude and therefore into defeat itself. So I began saying good words, words like hope -- belief -- faith -- victory. I used the powerful affirmation, "I can if I think I can." I began to act and think and work on that basis. Try that and your whole personality will begin reaching for the good things; and get them, too.

In an article Phyllis Simolke discussed this idea of "the good word," and how dangerous it is to use negative words. She suggested, for example, consideration of the word "no." That word "no" denotes a shutting of the door. It means failure, defeat, delay. But spell it backwards and take new hope, for backwards it spells "on." Get really activated; push "on" unremittingly toward your goal until your problem is solved, your difficulty dealt with.

She also drew attention to the word "teem." Everything seems to be "teeming" in your life, teeming with difficulty, teeming with regret, teeming with ineffectiveness. So she advises turning it around to form the word "meet." Meet each problem as it arises. You will no longer be teeming with defeat and hopelessness, but will become productive and creative by vigorously meeting each challenge as it arises. Turn "no" into "on" and "teem" into "meet."

Change your thinking to meet problems in a positive, constructive way. And remember the persistence principle: It's always too soon to quit.

Indeed, your chances of really getting where you want to go in life often hinge on your reaction to some shattering setback. Will you give up or will you keep on trying? It's as simple as that. And what you decide, decides your future.

CALL ON YOUR GRIT

Ever hear of the thrilling career of Hayes Jones? Back in 1960 this man was the phenomenon of the year in high hurdles racing. He won race after race. He broke records. He was, in fact, sensational. Naturally he was picked for the Olympic Games held that year at Rome. There he ran in the 110-meter high hurdles amid worldwide expectations that he would carry off the gold medal.

But surprisingly he didn't. He finished third. It was, of course, a keen disappointment. His first thought was: "So what! I might as well quit running." There would be no more Olympic Games for four long years. Besides, he had already won all the other coveted high hurdles championships. Why subject himself to four more strenuous years of keeping in top form? The only sensible thing was to forget it and get started in a business career.

This was plain logic, for sure. But Hayes Jones couldn't settle for that. "You can't be logical," he says, "about something you've wanted all your life." So he started training again, three hours a day, seven

days a week. And in the next couple of years made some new records in the 60-yard and 70-yard high hurdles.

Came the night of February 22, 1964 at Madison Square Garden. Jones was competing in the 60-yard high hurdles. He had announced that this would be his last indoor race. Tension ran high; every eye was on him. And he won, tying his own previous all-time record. Then a strange thing happened. In those days in the old Garden, when runners had crossed the finish line they disappeared under a ramp before they could slow down and stop. Walking back onto the track, Jones stood for a moment with head bowed, acknowledging the applause. Then seventeen thousand people packing the Garden stood in tribute. Jones wept. Many spectators wept, too, because a once-defeated man had still hung in there. He wouldn't quit, and the fans loved him for that.

He entered the 1964 Olympics at Tokyo and ran the 110-meter high hurdles in 13.6 seconds, finishing first -- winning his gold medal.

After that he went to work for an airline as a sales representative.

Later he offered to help as a volunteer in his city's physical fitness program. His activities got spectacular results.

In a speech to a crowd of young men he quoted some lines which anyone would do well to tuck into his mind and live by:

It's the plugging away that will win you the daft,

So don't be a piker, old pard!

Just draw on your grit,, it's so easy to quit:

It's the keeping-flour-chin-up that's hard.

It's easy to cry that you're beaten -- and die;

It's easy to crawfish and crawl;

But to fight and to fight when hope's out of sight --

Why, that s the best game of them all!

And though you come out of each grueling bout,

All broken and beaten and scarred,

Just have one more try -- it's dead easy to die,

It's the keeping-on-living that's hard.

Hayes Jones's story brings to mind a line from Goethe: "Austere perseverance, harsh and continuous, may be employed by the smallest of us and rarely fails of its purpose, for its silent power grows irresistibly greater with time." That is to say, just keep on trying -- that will do it.

This refusal to quit is called the persistence principle.

Sadly enough, we hear little about persistence in this soft, permissive era. But as America historically produced strong men, the importance of persistence was constantly driven into the consciousness of youth. They were told to fight the good fight and never let anything throw them, and if it did, get right back up and attack the difficulty, hit it hard and then some, and keep on no matter what. Perseverance -- that was the key word then, and it still remains the basic principle for anyone who wants success. You cannot creatively get anywhere in this life without sturdy application of the persistence principle.

KEEPING AT IT GETS RESULTS

The thinkers of the world, those who know the score, always ring the changes on persistence. Mohammed said, "God is with those who persevere." Mohammed, it appears, knew his stuff, and so did Shakespeare, who told us that "Much rain wears the marble." Well, marble is hard, very hard, but little raind...

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