

Exploring Leadership

PROBLEM SOLVING: PERSISTENCE

NASA experienced 20 failures in its 28 attempts to send rockets to space. It took Thomas Edison 1,000 attempts before inventing the light bulb. Dr. Seuss's first book was rejected by 27 publishers before it was accepted. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team for not being good enough. Despite being a penniless, depressed, divorced single mom, J.K. Rowling went from needing government assistance to being one of the richest women in the world in a 5-year span by writing the Harry Potter series. What do all these well-known names and stories have in common? Persistence!

CONVERSATION STARTER:

When was the last time you left a difficult task unfinished or gave up on a goal? What caused you to lose your fire?

Persistence is the ability to stick with something. If you practice the violin for over a year in order to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" perfectly, that's persistence! Persistence has many other names: perseverance, determination, resilience or a "can-do attitude." Success in life depends on your willingness to never give up, even when the reward is delayed or the task is difficult.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

FACILITATOR TIP:

- Watch [this video](#) before trying this activity.
- Small teams are best. Most individuals will not be physically able to shake the jar continually for ten minutes. It could also be done in pairs.

MAKING BUTTER

- Divide into groups of 3.
- Each group gets a mason jar half-filled with heavy cream and a tightly sealed lid.
- You have ten minutes to make butter by shaking the jar vigorously and continually. Trade off when your arms get tired. Go!
- Only those with persistence will be able to enjoy a slice of bread with homemade butter (and maybe jam or honey) when the time is up.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Identify examples of persistence that paid off.
- Participate in a task that requires persistence.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Mason Jars with tight lids
- Heavy whipping cream
- Bread, honey, other goodies that go with homemade butter, utensils



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Was your team persistent enough to complete the task? Why or why not?
- If you had to do it on your own, how long would it have taken you?
- What did you discover about persistence while working on this task?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are the tasks you encounter in real life that require persistence?
- How is making butter by hand similar to those tasks? What might help you stick with them?
- Why is it difficult to be Persistent and how can you overcome those obstacles?



CONCLUSION:

Persistence is a fundamental trait to develop in life for success. It is closely related to personal development and improvement and just as important. You will only improve when you fail. If you face failures with persistence and determination, you will learn things you cannot learn any other way. There are many failures on the road to success. Often the only difference between those who succeed and those who don't is that successful people never give up. And neither should you!

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REFERENCES

- <https://www.glidedesign.com/12-examples-of-persistence-paying-off/>
- <https://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/beverlywoodsES/Documents/AprilPerseverance.pdf>
- <https://thestayathomechef.com/how-to-make-homemade-butter-in-a-mason-jar/>
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