

Practically applying the character quality of

endurance

vs. Discouragement

"The inward strength to withstand stress and do my best."

By: Steve Becker

How well are you doing on your New Year's resolutions? Hopefully you are enduring in your efforts to lose weight, eat better, save more, spend more time with your family, or whatever your commitment might have been. If you are struggling with your resolution or with any other commitment you have made to yourself then the study of endurance is especially for you.

Do not get discouraged!

It seems like anything worth doing sounds great at the start until we face opposition that tests our resolve. I have experienced this opposition and have seen the death of many visions in my personal and professional experience. Some of my visions were domed from the day I started. Lack of planning, lack of preparation, or simply failing to get wise counsel about the idea at its inception were several ingredients for failure. (Some ideas should remain just that, a passing

idea only.) However, even the best ideas, those that are bathed in wise counsel, preparation and planning fail for lack of endurance. Often, we fail to persevere because we get discouraged and lose hope. Without hope, endurance is impossible. Wise planning and anticipation of setbacks and resistance will help keep hope alive when we experience "temporary failure". Think of failures as "wisdom fertilizer." Failures show us the things that do not work as we narrow the search for what does work. Don't give up hope; success is often the next step down the road after "temporary failure". As Thomas Edison said, "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up".

Is stress a friend or a foe?

How boring a life would be without stress. No hills, no valleys, no storms, and no roadblocks. Boring! We all need a certain amount of stress to make life interesting and to keep us challenged.

On the other hand, too much stress is harmful and can damage our bodies. Studies indicate that relationships that affirm are probably the single best protection

against stress-induced damage to health. Ask for support from others when you feel out of control. It is the quickest way to lift your own spirit.

Desire to finish strong!

I spent most of my first 50 years focused on success from an achievement standpoint. I hope to spend the time I have left focused on significance. I think that, in the fullness of a lifetime, most of us learn how to transition from success to significance. Yesterday was a great day in my pursuit to finish strong. After coming home from work a little early, I spent time teaching our almost [two-year-old grandson](#) how to pick cucumbers out of the garden and how to throw the seeds from ash trees behind our home into the air making "whirly birds" as we called them. I consider as truly significant the investment in the life of our grandson and the future generations he might influence. A hundred achievements called out to me yesterday as I chose to focus on what was best over what was good. A move to significance always faces opposition from the world of success filled with many worthy projects. So persevere as you strive to invest your time in what is significant. Endure life's challenges and finish strong.

Commitment to ENDURANCE

- I will not be a quitter.
- I will put my whole heart into everything I do.
- I will not waste myself on meaningless pursuits.
- I will accept both instruction and correction.
- I will bend instead of break.