

CHAPTER 17: TENACIOUS

Never, Never, Never Quit

“To see far is one thing; going there is another.” Constantin Brancusi

“To finish first, you must finish.” Rick Mears

In the summer of 2001, John Maxwell went to England with his wife and four friends. They have been very close and looked forward to the trip. Each had their own ideas of specific interests and historic site, but one friend, Dan Reiland, absolutely had to see the cross walk where the Beatles had been photographed for the Abbey Road album. He wanted the group to get their picture taken walking across the street, just as John, Ringo, Paul, and George had. This visit was essential to Dan and his trip wouldn't have been complete without it. Each day, he asked when they would go and finally the last morning, they went. Of course, when they got there they couldn't believe it. The street was closed due to construction. They decided to get out of the cabs anyway and check out the situation. They found out that a huge crane was scheduled to come down the street later that day, and it was the reason for the closing. Not one of them wanted Dan to be disappointed, and since John always loved a challenge, they decided to work on this problem.

They spoke with the workmen and at first would not budge. The “team of friends” explained the situation, offered the workers lunch, a big burly guy with a thick accent said, “Oh, let's help the Yanks out. What could it hurt?” They proceeded to move trucks, cones, and even let them climb on the equipment to get a better shot. It was a moment that they would never forget, and each has the photo to remind them.

There was really no extraordinary talent to get that accomplished. They succeeded because of being tenacious. Even people who lack talent and fail to cultivate some of the other vital qualities of a team player have a chance to contribute to the team and help it succeed if they possess a tenacious spirit.

Begin tenacious means:

- Giving all that you have, not more than you have
- Working with determination, not waiting on destiny
- Quitting when the job is done, not when you're tired

To reflect on this in our work

When others have given up, do you keep hanging on?

If the team hasn't found a solution to a problem, are you willing to keep plugging away to the very end in order to succeed?

If you sometimes give up before the rest of the team does, you may need a strong dose of tenacity.

I look back at all of the advocacy work across our state last year I'm so thankful that the team had the tenacity to continue. We secured 40 million dollars with it. The efforts have not stopped and will continue to be stronger as we ask for another 20 million to continue the work.

In summary, A. L. Williams said:

You beat 50 percent of the people in America by working hard. You beat another 40 percent by being a person of honesty and integrity and standing for something. The last 10 percent are in a dogfight in the free enterprise system.

To improve your tenacity

- Work harder and/or smarter. If you tend to be a clock-watcher who never works beyond quitting time, then you need to change your habits. Put in additional time by arriving earlier or staying later.
- Stand for something. To succeed, you must act with absolute integrity.
- Make your work a game. Find others in your organization that have similar goals and create a friendly competition with them to motivate you and them.

Doesn't this hit home for all of us working with 21C schools? Our days speed by with the work that we do everyday. I can't imagine even being a clock-watcher . . . except that it turns too fast for me some days. I know that I have met many 21C Coordinators, Principals, Superintendents, and team players that are Tenacious in every way. Keep up the good work! I feel blessed to have gotten to know each of you and hear about your programs. Have a great holiday!

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