

Introduction

In challenging times, such as the time we currently live in, where people live in fear, seclusion and under restrictions resulting from the recent global pandemic, persistence and positive attitudes are necessary for survival and goal achievement. Yet, staying positive and motivated under such conditions can be difficult, especially for students who need to achieve their learning goals in new and remote platforms under these adverse conditions.

This section offers a brief and simple explanation of the concepts of persistence and grit, as well as provide a guide to ways of developing persistence and positive attitude in the drive to achieve learning goals when conditions are unfavourable.

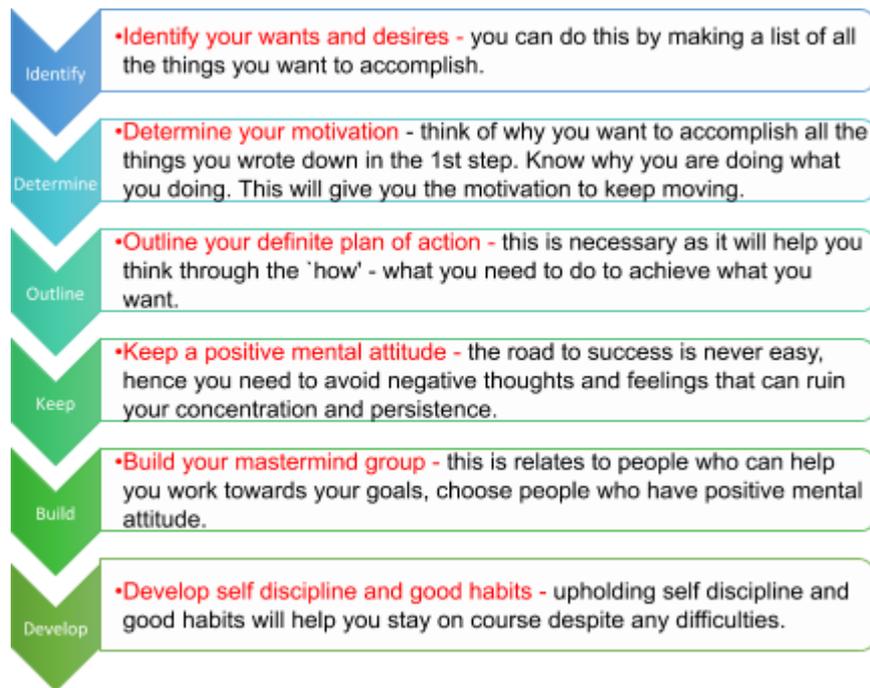
Understanding persistence and grit

Persistence has to do with the act of continuing steadfastly in some purpose or course of action in spite of opposition or difficulties (Dictionary.Com). Persistence is in some instances also referred to as 'GRIT', and invariably tied to goal achievement. Grit has to do with the tenacity required in the pursuit of a goal, that is, the state of 'hanging in there' and 'never giving up' on a goal. Stoltz (2015) sees grit as the struggle, sacrifice and suffering that a person has to endure in order to achieve a goal. With this understanding in mind, having persistence or grit implies that:

You have set some goals that must be achieved against all odds;
You are never giving up the attempt to achieve the goals and;
You are determined to overcome all obstacles in an effort to achieve goals.

Steps in maintaining persistence or grit

The diagram below outlines six important steps you must take in order to maintain grit or persistence in the drive to achieve your goals.



Tips for maintaining a positive attitude

- **Recharge your batteries** – spend some time by yourself by switching off from the outside world and doing some of the things you like to do
- **You can choose to be positive or negative** – the way you react to issues/events in the world around can affect your motivation level. You always have a choice to be positive or negative. Choosing to react positively is always a healthy choice.
- **Create a strong start** – most people have to drag themselves out of bed and this sets a negative frame for their entire day, create a morning ritual that reinforces how great life is, and how happy you are to be alive.
- **Exercise** – exercise is a natural feel good drug, and a good way to maintain a positive attitude. Exercising helps to release positive chemicals into your blood stream.
- **Think of something good** or of a time you felt success and joy.
- **Stop negative thoughts in their tracks** – whenever negative thoughts start creeping up, stop them in their tracks.
- **Focus on what you CAN do** – never say “I CAN’T” or “I don’t know” or “it’s too hard”.
- **Live with gratitude** – keep a gratitude journal where you jot down things that you are grateful for at the end day. Note down all positive things achieved during the day.

Additional Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H14bBuluwB8>

Summary

In this section, we tried to explain the concepts, grit and persistence, and how these, together with positive attitude helps in the achievement of goals during challenging times. The section also provide some tips or guide on how to maintain persistence and positive attitude in working towards achieving set goals during difficult times.

Reference:

Paul G. Stoltz (2015): GRIT: the new science of what it takes to persevere, flourish and succeed. Climbing Strong Press.