

That diamond quality called determination

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The progress of mankind, especially after the French Revolution in 1789 is really incredible. The advancement of science and technology during the last two hundred years or more, is mind-boggling. The present generation is certainly privileged to enjoy the limitless use of radio, TV, video, calculator, computer, celltel, and fax, E - mail and Internet. The modern means of transport and communication have made the world into a global village. No wonder we are happily marching into the third millennium fiercely proud of our marvellous achievements and brilliant accomplishments.

Man has traversed the sandy deserts, crossed the mighty oceans, surveyed the North pole and the South pole, explored the Arctic and the Antarctic oceans, scaled the tallest peak Mt. Everest umpteen times, set foot on the moon more than a couple of times and has sent rockets to Mars and Venus. He is cock sure that the Rocket Cassini will land on Saturn in 2005. Another rocket, Voyager 2 launched on 20th August 1977 is heading for a rendezvous with eternity. "By the year 2015, Voyager 2 will probably fall silent, its generators too feeble to power communication with the children of the men who launched it. Some time around the year 42000, if all goes as planned, it will come within 1.7 light years of the star ROSS 248, a cool, a red spot of twinkling gas, one fifth as massive as our sun. In 296,000 years, Voyager 2 will pass within 4.3 light years of Sirius, the dog star". (Newsweek, September 4, 1989) All this is possible because of man's diamond quality called determination. His will power, his "never say die" attitude comes to the fore and he has the ability and intelligence to make fantastic things happen. No doubt, he has failed many times in his various attempts, but he never once gave up. He has proved that "failures are the pillars of success" and "where there is a will, there is a way."

Mankind's progress in the field of medicine is unbelievable. Man has a cure

for almost every sickness. Ever since the brave Dr. Christian Barnard, in far away South Africa succeeded in transplanting a human heart, transplants of other organs have become very facile and common. Millions of lives are saved through this daring and dynamic venture. With the advent of laser beams, major surgery has been revolutionized. New medicines are discovered to alleviate the crushing effects of T.B., Cancer, AIDS, though the complete cure is still not possible in certain cases. Thousands of devoted doctors around the globe, unknown and unnoticed, dedicate hours of their precious time working through the night to discover new cures. We have to be eternally grateful to such warriors of wonders in the medical field. With determination, they go on striving for excellence in their noble profession.

Sickness and physical handicaps are nothing to those empowered with determination. Stephen Hawking, the world famous and the best known theoretical astrophysicist is a classic example. A victim of a degenerative nerve disease, Stephen Hawking is paralysed. He can neither talk nor walk, but he traverses around the globe entertaining university students and professors alike, with his scientific insight and vast knowledge. Seated on a special wheel chair, he addresses his audience, or rather since he cannot speak, his computer driven voice synthesizer intones in an electronic voice. His book, the 1988 - best seller, A Brief History of Time, spent 53 weeks on the New York Times list. His second book, Black Holes and Baby Universes" is already making its impact throughout the scientific world. Moreover, Stephen Hawking proves himself a great inspiration to all those who are crippled and paralysed.

Remember Helen Keller, that blind, deaf and dumb girl who carved a name for herself in the history of the world as a very courageous woman. No obstacle would deter her will to achieve. Slowly but surely she mastered the art of communicating with people and overcame her terrible handicaps with her sheer determination. She would travel around the globe, communicating in five languages, aiding people

with similar physical defects. Tales of courage emerge from the pages of history, giving meaning to our otherwise dreary existence in the planet called Earth. Explorers, inventors, discoverers, remarkable sports - stars the "dare - devils" for the common man, were enthused and fired with determination - the spirit of never giving up.

One day a young, innocent lad returned from his school, sobbing bitterly. He was carrying a letter from his headmaster which read that the boy was partially deaf and too dull to learn. The parents were requested to make their own provisions for the boy's education. The boy stood at the door crying. "What's the matter with you sonny?" The mother earnestly inquired. The boy was too dazed to utter even a syllable. Tears pouring down his cheeks, he handed that letter over to his mother. When she read it she was beside herself with rage. "Too dull to learn!" she thundered. "I know what to do. I am going to teach my son Tom myself." Her anxious but brave motherly heart would not accept defeat. Some how or other, she was determined to teach him herself. Setting apart her precious time in tutoring her son Tom, armed with enough patience, humility and plain common sense, she began to teach him in her house.

Years rolled by, the boy who was "too dull to learn" had become world famous with his fabulous and fantastic inventions. The world recognised him as 'a distinguished inventor who gave much happiness to mankind. The day he died, the entire nation stood still. Honouring him in a fitting and touching manner, exactly at 9.59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, every house across USA turned off its lights for one minute as a mark of profound respect and glorious tribute to that eminent scientist Thomas Edison, the inventor of electricity, movie projector and record player. At his demise, the boy who was "too dull to learn" had had over a thousand patents to his credit. A mother's determination had paid dividends beyond measure.

"Be humble in victory, but determined in defeat"