



THE SPIDER AND THE WATER DRAGON---A LESSON ON PERSEVERANCE

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If you are ever uncertain about the meaning of perseverance, no matter how many dictionaries you've consulted, try to find a spider spinning its web. As the web takes its first definitive form, you will see this lowly creature patiently going about the weaving process, moving to and fro in order to attain that intricate shape. It loses its hold sometimes, but you can see how the spider uses the fine thread from its gut to get back up again and continue with the whole process. Now, if there ever was a creature gifted with so much perseverance, it is most probably the spider.

We are faced with numerous storms in life, some actual, some perceived. Those who are not made of sterner stuff give up so easily, throwing in the towel and their hands up in the air, sometimes much too soon. Only later do they realize that had they waited out the storm a little longer, they would have prevailed.

It has often been said that good things come to those who wait. I believe that even better things await those who continue trying. Lying in wait might be the best option sometimes, but waiting without doing anything is just a waste of time. Do whatever you can to change the situation, to turn it in your favor. It might be thought of as trying too hard, but isn't trying too hard a lot better than trying to stay put doing nothing?

It is difficult to be dynamic, ever moving. We all need to take stock of the situation at some point. But taking stock for too long can amount to plain and simple laziness, and in this dynamic world, those who stay put are sometimes run over in the blink of an eye. And then, they will never know what hit them. You wouldn't want to be a casualty in this sense, would you?

The mythical creature that rules the New Year is a dynamic one-the water dragon. Water is continuously moving, unless it's in some sort of container, of course. Then its only positive movement is to follow the shape of its container. But that's Science, and this is Life 101. In its natural setting, i.e., rivers, lakes, oceans and seas, etc., water seeks its own level. The dragon, a fire-breathing creature, undulates, flies, perhaps seeking its destiny. The combination is therefore dynamic.

We, as the most dynamic beings of all, owe it to the world and to ourselves to be dynamic like this year's symbolic mythical creature, and the humble spider. We must never stop seeking for greatness, we must continue trudging on even when all the chips are down. The crises that the world is beset with are not about to disappear so quickly. But persevere we must, for all these too, will pass.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define perseverance. Is this a quality you believe you have?
2. Talk about a time in your life when you have felt lost and weary of the world. What inspired you to persevere despite everything?
3. Is there a particular individual you admire for his/her perseverance? Talk about this person in class.
4. Why is it difficult to persevere in this world?
5. How can perseverance be learned/ taught?