

IDEAS 29

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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TENACITY – A PERSISTENT DETERMINATION

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Every individual has that ardent desire to pursue his dream and ambition in life and have that persistent determination to climb the ladder of success. If you have that positive outlook in life, then you would not feel adamant about being a tenacious person. There a dozen of times wherein we all experience failures but it should not be an excuse for us to feel discouraged and not live our life to the hilt. A person who is very much determined to attain whatever he is aiming for will try anything to achieve his goal. Nobody wants to be just berserk with all his problems and not try do anything no matter what it takes for him to discover a panacea to resolve all of these difficulties.

As a matter of fact, there is nobody here on earth who would not like to be a successful person. Definitely, it holds true that everyone is dreaming to have a better life, but have we strived so hard to the point of doing anything just to reach that goal of ours in life? Have we exhausted all our efforts in doing so? Then it is about time to be at the helm of it! Let us be tenacious in the pursuit of our dreams and keep that fire of persistence burning in your heart. Do not just try to be ostentatious about whatever aspirations you have in life, be determined to pursue your dreams and reach your ambition.

You will see a lot of people go for it, so then why don't you? Not only that, you will see remarkable and prominent persons who really didn't give up and have fought valiantly to get their heart's desire. Even if it takes years and years for them to realize their dream, they are being tenacious about it. Most people who have given up much have achieved much and have sacrificed that much too. Amidst all life's trials and tribulations, one must never quit, even if they are on the verge of quitting. What keeps them going is their virtue of persistence, much determination, to battle and outwit the adversities of life.

Make every second of your life count and let us make it worth the struggle, for after all, we only have one life to live. We might as well live it to the fullest, never give up and let us spread our wings like that of an eagle, never growing weary or tired but always ready to spread out its wings to soar up high above the sky. When you are about to give up, never quit, for that last chance of yours to try will see you through. Be determined and keep on going until that one last drop of effort in you will mean achieving your dream that you longed and hoped for. Want to be on top of the heap? Then discover and maintain that tenacity hidden in you. Let us constantly have that persistent determination to become what we would like ourselves and our lives to be, A SUCCESS!

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you always have that tendency of quitting whenever you don't feel tenacious? Why? Explain.
2. What does being tenacious mean to you? Elaborate further.
3. What is the true meaning of tenacity for you?
4. How does tenacity affect you as a person? Justify your answer.
5. Are you willing to sacrifice more than enough to become a tenacious person? Explain your answer.



SHEER TENACITY – CRUCIAL TO A CAREER SUCCESS

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In the pursuit of your ambition or dreams in life, I believe that a goal-oriented individual would not allow people, events or situations that they encounter to get in their way for that person to attain a career success. Instead, sheer... tenacity would then play a crucial part for every person to pursue a career success. This kind of people is very much committed into what they do to the point of taking full responsibility in their life and in their career success, therefore, this is what makes them tenacious. They have set their minds into doing something and believe in themselves that anything could be possible under the sun, that is, they can do anything. For that matter, there is nobody who can insinuate that you cannot do anything that you dream of or have wanted to do so right from the start. They have found what their purpose in life is and have pursued it tenaciously.

Tenacious people are committed people who are relentlessly focused on achieving their goal or what they really want. They are entwined to the fact that they are very much responsible for their own life and career success. These are people who are willing to do every necessary step for them to succeed and they are also considered to be high goal-setters who will gladly do anything to achieve what they aim for. Considerably, these are persons who are highly rational for they know pretty well that along the line, they will encounter a lot of difficulties and they are very much willing to weather the afflictions in life. Yes, they are very optimistic people taking things positively, who are intently focused on their goal.

How many people do you see nowadays who are downright tenacious? How many of them do we chance upon who actually never stop no matter what lies ahead of them? Instead, tenacious people choose to move forward towards their goals, to realize their dreams, ambitions in life and career success. Seldom indeed do we find people who are vent on staking out everything to be successful. Only tenacious people are explicit in doing such things.

So what are we waiting for? Let us hop in the vehicle of tenacity, be witty enough to be tenacious in your own right and prod upon the trail of success. Be the person that you really want to be, unmindful of the circumstances that surround you and live in oblivion of life's adversities. After all, the saying, "Try and try until you succeed" proves to be true to the majority. Do not quit, because this would only mean giving up your career success dreams. Go for what you believe! A person can become successful through working intelligently, having that drive to pursue his ambitions tenaciously. Talent, hard work, determination and persistence are tantamount to sheer tenacity which proves to be crucial to a career success.

Questions for discussion:

1. Are you a committed type of person displaying the characteristics of tenacity? Explain further.
2. Are you having second thoughts on being tenacious to live your dream? Why or why not?
3. Do you press yourself hard towards attaining your goal by being tenacious? How?
4. Do you agree that sheer tenacity is crucial to a career success? Justify your answer.
5. What does tenacity mean to you? Elaborate on your answer.



TENACITY: AN ECLECTIC ESSAY

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Every one of us has a goal to achieve, a career to follow and a life to grow. It is a fact that every individual always tries to do his best to attain his goals in life, to be successful his career and to live life to the fullest. However, it's not easy to do it. There are obstacles in life to be eradicated. They are the barriers throughout the journey of achieving these desired goals, these chosen careers and these nurtured lives. They affect too much before we achieve the fruit of success. They make us frown, they make us disappointed, they make us burned out, they make us cry and much worse is, they make us totally hopeless. How do we deal with these dilemmas in life to accomplish our goals? How are we going to reach and hit the target? Perhaps you have asked your many friends, you have consulted many experts and you have taken many actions to seek advices from the different professionals because you have that burning desire to succeed in life. But sometimes we forget that the actions to top out our achievement lie in our very own tenacity. And you would even wonder about it – our very own tenacity? Yes, precisely, it is a character that is often left out in molding our hopes and ambitions, and essentially, in climbing the ladder of success.

There are many definitions of this word. The very short and simple meaning that truly catches everyone's mind is "persistent determination". Another meaning states that "tenacity is having the quality to be determined to achieve a goal. People who are tenacious are typically very stubborn about achieving their goal no matter what their limits or what stands in their way". Whys are they described as very stubborn? Is it because they are difficult to manage? Certainly and definitely not! It is because they have the ideal focus to drive their determination to achieve their objectives. And this ideal focus goes with persistent perseverance that serves a strong and powerful weapon to combat all the negative adversaries in life. It is truly significant to combine focus and perseverance to fulfill and carry out the vision to succeed. Are the adversaries helpful to be more persistent to move on? A person needs to strengthen his mind and direct his will to be what he wants to be, to find what he seeks for and to achieve what he dreams up. The famous Alexander Graham Bell once said "What this power is I cannot say; all I know is that it exists and it becomes available only when a man is in that state of mind in which he knows exactly what he wants and is fully determined not to quit until he finds it". Is this the tenacity that he refers to? Yes, it is. Tenacity exists and is available to function when we want to achieve something. Just like our full determination will activate to pursue and follow the dreams. This will not stop until we succeed.

It's not easy to possess tenacity in life. Likewise, it's not easy to attain success in life. Determination is there but often misused. We partly say "I have the determination" but it doesn't show. Simply, it is because the essence is not used well according to its desired purpose. The execution is weak. The motivation is lacking. How can you get the success that you want if you are directed to a wrong practice? Yes, there is the tenacity that you want but you're not using it well. Like what Nathaniel Bronner Jr. has uttered, "Success is often not a matter of talent, but a matter of tenacity". When our determination is not persistent, we can't survive until the finish line of our dreams. There would be a particular moment to hang on and specific reason to stop. We are given talents to use and be enhanced as we live along the shadows of our dreams. However, the lack of tenacity leads us to be incomplete. And we ask ourselves, "Where did I go wrong? I did my best but it wasn't enough. How can I go on to achieve these shattered dreams?"

Now, you tend to go back from the start to visualize and reflect what you've done. Where did your tenacity go? We should not forget the powerful line from a poem of Sri Chinmoy, it is written "No determination of the mind, no transformation of the life". He emphasized that our determination starts from the mind. It explains us to think the ways on how to succeed, on how to transform our life into the realm of accomplishment. How will you transform in order to hit the dimension of success will depend on how you practice your tenacity. How far will your persistent determination go will depend on how you carry out the possibilities and opportunities to succeed in life. Let your firmness and persistence serve as the guiding light to follow the track of success. Let tenacity shines until you touch the rewarding moment of success!

Questions for discussion:

1. What is your idea of tenacity? Give an example to support your answer.
2. Why do we need to possess a persistent determination to succeed in life?
3. How do you nurture the tenacity in your life?
4. What's your ambition in life? How will you practice tenacity to achieve it?
5. Why do some people give up where in fact they're near to succeed?



LIVING LIFE DANGEROUSLY

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Referring to the persistency of purpose or simply holding on to something even when things get really rough and tough, tenacity is often synonymous to persistence and perseverance. It's a quality that most of us have, and few of us know how to manage. After all, there can be a certain disadvantage in holding on too tightly when the world's forces dictate that letting go would be a much better proposition, but some things can not be let go so easily.

Consider Rosa Parks' immense courage and determination to hold on to her principles of racial equality in the face of white supremacy. Her fearless tenacity led to the Modern Civil Rights Movement that was launched in answer to the long-standing racial segregation in the United States. Although Rosa Parks was not the first to launch such successful campaigns, she has been acclaimed as the "mother of the freedom movement", paving the way for racial equality in the most powerful nation of the world. What probably set Rosa Parks apart from her predecessors in the civil rights movement was the tenacity with which she pursued her campaign, collaborating with other civil rights leaders and organizing activities that made people sit up and pay heed.

Elsewhere in the world, in today's times, more and more people from different countries have launched movements of their own, all with diverse aims and objectives. Most of those movements have been geared towards toppling governments and evil regimes; some, like the Occupy Movement, have been against certain policies and standards in specific aspects of business or of life. What makes some such movements more successful than others is the tenacity with which their organizers hold on to their ideals—withstanding threats to life and limb. Unless movement leaders are tough enough to grit their teeth and endure the rigors of their campaign, they can never hope to see the light at the end of a long and arduous journey.

Some people come out of such experiences with only good things to say. The experience allows them to grow, to improve, and to see their own strengths which they never dreamed they had. These are individuals who see the positive in all the bleakness, the firmness of resolve in all the uncertainty. These people come out richer for the experience of having withstood contradiction and faced down the ills of society as a whole and their individual weaknesses in particular.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are others who come out broken, hating the world and hating themselves. While they go on blaming others for their shortcomings and wretchedness, they cease to see that what probably worked more strongly against them above all other considerations was their absence of tenacity. No firmness, no resolution.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Have you ever experienced being at the center of a conflict where your tenacity was put to the test? Talk about your experience.
2. Why do others succeed when numerous others fail in an undertaking?
3. Which do you think can work better—a good decision or the tenacity to pursue something to the very end? Justify your answer.
4. How do you keep your spirits up when faced with endless adversity?
5. What are the consequences of losing tenacity in the middle of organized movements and campaigns? Cite specific examples, as needed.



THE CONCEPT OF TENACITY: SIGNIFICANCE

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For those of us who've been wondering how tenacious the human spirit truly is, let us look at life's most painful scenes.

Have you ever heard of situations where fire-ravaged homes in which the blazes have been put out, become settings for heart-stopping real life drama? I have seen countless times on the news such heartbreaking scenes: a mother and child burned to death holding on to each other; siblings burned to death while embracing each other; a grandmother burned to death while holding her grandchild. Countless other such scenes have been shown on TV news, casting a new meaning to the word TENACITY.

Of strange and entirely opposite coincidence was this father who managed to bring his fighting cocks to safety while leaving his children behind to bring their younger sibling (or was it siblings) to safer ground while their house was burning. Totally incomprehensible, this one bit of tragic news, bringing the word TENACITY to a whole new light of atrocity.

And then there are those situations where hospital patients and accident victims hold on to dear life, in the sincere hope that a new lease on life would be granted to them. When hope seems to be fading for such people, it is their loved ones who hold up the torch. Visibly stronger than their sick and fallen relatives, the more able ones hold on. In some cases, the strength which the more able ones provide is able to somehow effectively bridge the gap closer towards life than to certain death. Unfortunately, for a great many others, even the tenacity with which the much stronger ones hold on might not really be enough to keep death at bay. But the sad fact remains: when the ill loved one loses all inspiration and hope to live, the tenacity with which the others hold on can never suffice. Life is snuffed out easily once the one to live loses the willingness to continue living.

And then there are those who continue clinging to the memory of a lost loved one—not necessarily a dead loved one. Perhaps, the lost loved one has found another beloved, or has gone far, far away. Maybe, the lost loved one just decided to live an entirely new life, apart from those in his past. Those who cling to the memories of such lost love are doomed to live their lives forever in limbo, merely drifting instead of existing, coping instead of moving on, dying slowly instead of living.

There are many ways by which intelligent beings hold on. And there are many things that intelligent beings hold on to. What really matters is the significance of what we hold on to, the impact of what we adhere tightly to.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What principles do people often hold on to? What principles do you personally adhere to?
2. How do people demonstrate their tenacity in life? Cite examples.
3. Why do people lose the will to live?
4. How can we encourage someone who has lost all interest in life?
5. How best can one cope in life after losing a loved one?



IMAGES OF TENACITY ON MY TV SCREEN

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Why do we bother to hold on? Why do we find ourselves clinging to some things that affect us in a certain way or simply become our reason for holding on? Tenacity is its own reason; although sometimes we often find that it has its reasons.

We always cling to what we believe is right, either by our own standards or others'. It comforts us, nay, strengthens us further, to know that we are not alone in upholding whatever we wish to uphold. There's safety in numbers, as they say. Numbers guarantee that you are likely not the first head to roll when the ax falls. This easily leads to the Pied Piper phenomena, where the belief of one dominates those of others', and leads many to blind stewardship. It would be excellent if the way that everyone follows is just and true. Clinging to principles in such settings is exemplary. But what happens when the way happens to be more crooked than one has ever thought possible?

Images on the TV screen sometimes either appall or amaze.

We see people who hold on to what they believe is rightly theirs, what they think the world owes them. Ill-gotten wealth is readily passed off as having been amassed above board, without falsity or misrepresentation. Many get misled, often sympathizing with what appears to be mere accusations without proof. But as more and more details get unraveled, we find out about the great amount of cover-up to mislead, the enormous efforts to play the public mind. Such images appall with the sheer audacity of the drama that seems to be played out, and the utter alacrity of the pawns being used.

Then there are those images that amaze, such as that which I saw many months back. It was the news story of a girl who braved the floods in their village to rescue the national flag. The picture of that dear and courageous girl firmly holding the nation's flag aloft as the waters raged was worth a thousand words. It also energized others who had witnessed the story on television to launch campaigns to help that brave girl. Such images amaze, inspire and temporarily break the monotone of selfish politicians and greedy government officials.

The world is filled with thousands of images that showcase tenacity—either at its finest or its worst instances. The really great ones sometimes bring tears to our eyes and a certain pain to the heart. The really horrible ones invite the gnashing of teeth and the clenching of fists in anger and contempt. Most times, the images seem to incite negative emotions rather than positive ones. Let's hope that whatever image of tenacity we project, we are able to incite the latter.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What do you think about politicians who enrich themselves while in their positions and then justify their deeds with sheer lies? Can you cite examples of such people?
2. Think of examples of people whose display of tenacity has been inspiring. Talk about them in class.
3. What punishment do you think those who hold on to ill-gotten wealth should get? Why?
4. What principles in life do you hold on to? Were your parents highly-influential to your choice of principles?
5. If the beliefs you possessed clashed with those of your loved ones, what would you do?



THE TWILIGHT ZONE OF TENACITY

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When is tenacity useful and constructive? It is good when tenacity does not allow unjustifiable acts and questionable deeds. Tenacity is noble when the intentions are also thus. When the thing that we hold on to is good and true in nature, such as when we stand firmly behind principles and beliefs that are shared by a greater majority, or when our actions are unselfish and free of conspiratorial nature, then tenacity is indeed great.

However, there are among us those who hold on to things which are inherently selfish and which cause harm to others. Such people are blinded by ambition, greed and ill-will, harboring all manner of evil thoughts in order to cling on to what they believe is rightly theirs.

Such are those whose lust for power and influence blind them to their neighbors' plight, making them cast aside all other interests but theirs alone. Such individuals have existed since the dawn of time, most likely as passed down from the first man and woman on the planet. For wasn't the thought of being in equal status with the Almighty what brought down suffering to the human race?

And of course, there are those who hold on to vices. These people succumb to the weakness of the spirit and create a number of excuses for doing so. "I can quit whenever I want to." "Doing it once won't really hurt." "Nobody knows about it anyway." Or worse, "Everybody does it anyway." The jury is out on whether such people won't readily jump off a bridge when someone says jump off. If we can not be responsible for our own actions and cling on to the mistaken notion that there will always be a way out, then our tenacity is grossly misplaced.

Another quite interesting case, worthy to be gossip fodder, is the tenacity to illicit relationships. Hell has no fury like a woman (or a man—works both ways) scorned, or so they say. Those of you who have watched the 1987 thriller *Fatal Attraction* might remember the talented Glenn Close who played the scorned woman in the movie. Michael Douglas played a husband (Dan Gallagher) who had a weekend affair with the character played by Glenn Close (Alexandra 'Alex' Forrest). Unfortunately, for the husband, the weekend dalliance was something that Alex didn't want to put an end to so abruptly. Because of Alex's tenacity—and Dan's weakness—the affair continues. This results in a horrific psychological battle that escalates to violence and death. Tenacity, in its evil form, is evil personified.

Tenacity is meant to be good and noble. But it has its ugly side; we might not notice it completely when we are caught up with a sense of perseverance and persistence. But there is always a darker side, just as there are always two sides of the same coin.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think great power is intoxicating?
2. What are some of the vices that people persistently cling to? What are the most common excuses they have for not letting go of their vices?
3. Who stands to lose more in an illicit relationship, the man or the woman? Or both? Justify your answer.
4. What advice would you give to someone who persistently clings to a vice or an illicit relationship?
5. How can a person with great influence and power not get blinded by them?



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