

Tools For Success: Perseverance

By Brian Ayers, CSCS

You will need to develop several skills to be successful long-term in your weight loss goals. One of the most important of these will be Perseverance. Motivational writer John C. Maxwell is the author of *Talent Is Never Enough*. If you haven't read it, I highly recommend it. The book is written in regards to talent in business, however, many of the lessons he writes about are applicable to weight loss as well.

In one of the chapters, Maxwell discusses perseverance in a way that I feel applies to anyone struggling through a rough patch on their road to fitness. "Confronted with adversity, many people give up while others rise up. How do those who succeed do it? They persevere. They find the benefit to them personally that comes with any trial and they recognize that the best thing about adversity is coming out the other side of it." He goes on to point out that "Perseverance doesn't really come into play until you are tired. When you are fresh, excited, and energetic you approach a task with vigor...only when you become tired do you need perseverance. To successful people fatigue and discouragement are not signs to quit. They perceive them as signals to draw on their reserves, rely on their character, and keep going."

This is one of the hardest things for many people to do when it comes to diet and exercise. Once people decide to make a change, they are generally excited and eager to get started. While that excitement can be enough to initiate positive changes, it's perseverance that will ultimately keep them going. There may come a point where you are being consistent with your exercise and sticking to your nutrition plan but, for one reason or another, your progress plateaus. This is not the time to give up, but rather, it is the time to draw on perseverance. It may simply be time to change up your approach. Once your body has adapted to a certain exercise routine, then that routine becomes less effective at facilitating further change. That doesn't mean that exercises as a whole will no longer work for you, it just means that it's time to change up your strategy. Giving up should never be an option.

In his book, Maxwell goes on to discuss the idea that the energy that you invest in making these changes is really an investment in yourself. "...perseverance is an investment. It means more than working hard. It is a willingness to bind oneself emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually to an idea or task until it has been completed. Perseverance demands a lot, but here's the good news: everything you give is an investment in yourself."

This does a great job of summing up what it takes to make real, positive, lasting changes in our lives. You will be tested by hardships on your road to fitness and sometimes it may take all the conviction that you possess to make the right decisions, but you can do so with the knowledge that you are making that investment in yourself.