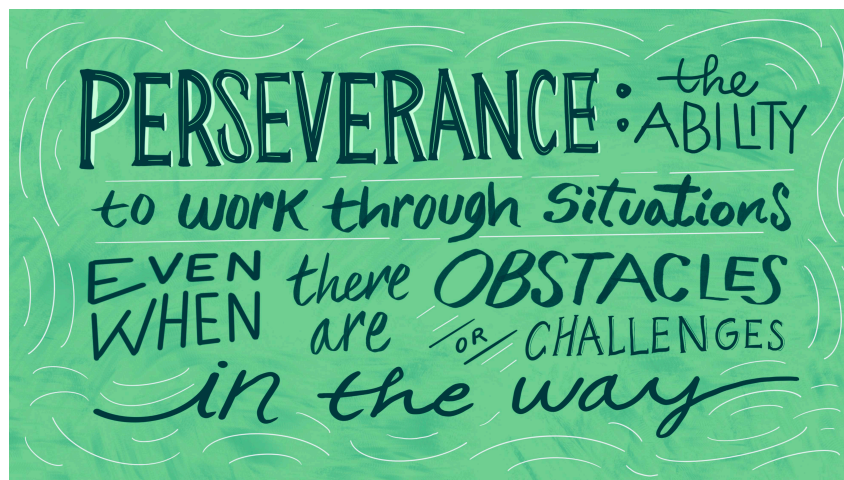




Dear Parents,

We are so excited to share with you our Character Strong Newsletter. There are many ideas and parenting tips embedded within this monthly document. The Bemis staff believes that you will find this resource to be helpful and that it will provide you with a connection to our school. We look forward to partnering with you throughout the school year by locking arms together, loving on your kiddos together and living out the belief that together we will help our students make a difference in this world by being great kids of character.

November Trait: Perseverance



Sincerely,

Jeremey Whan

Jeremey Whan

Principal

Bemis Elementary School



Perseverance (Grades K-2)

For PurposeFull Families



EXPLANATION:

This month we're talking about the trait of Perseverance. The dictionary defines it as: "Persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success." The definition we are using in class is:

Perseverance: the ability to work through situations even when there are obstacles or challenges in the way.

A lot of research today is telling us that the highest indicators of success in our kids isn't just about their grades or their IQ. The number one skill that helps people of all walks of life be successful is GRIT! The ability to persevere in the face of adversity or even failure. Over the course of the month, we will talk about inspiring people who faced many failures before they found success. We will talk about what it means to navigate tough stuff, even when it feels overwhelming or really hard. We will talk about having a Growth Mindset - to see challenges and failure as an opportunity to grow instead of a brick wall.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- What do you know about rabbits? What do you know about turtles? Which one should win if they were to have a race? Have you heard the story about the [Tortoise and the Hare](#)? The hare proudly bragged about his speed and knew that he'd win, so he rested a lot and let himself get sidetracked and distracted. The turtle took a slow and steady approach to the race, plodding along at a pace that was right for him to make sure he had stamina and endurance. In the end, it's the turtle who wins by a hair. What is this story trying to tell us?
- Failure is a part of Perseverance. What does it mean to fail? Can you think of a time when you failed and were not able to reach your goal? What are some ways we can respond to failure that are both positive and negative?
- Share a personal story of Perseverance with your child. What were your challenges? What or who helped you persevere? What tangible steps did you take? What lessons did you learn?

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- Why do you think it's important to keep on going, even when things get hard? Who do you think about when you hear, "Quitters never win and winners never quit?" What makes them so good at Perseverance? Do you think there's ever a time that it'd be okay to quit?
- Discuss a time in your life when you persevered even though it may have been difficult. What happened and how did you feel? What did you learn from the experience?
- What's a challenge for you right now? What's the hardest part? What are some resources - people, strategies, tools, inspiration - that could help you? What's one step we can take together to overcome this challenge?

APPLICATION:

Books:

- [The Most Magnificent Thing](#) by Ashley Spires
- [A Beautiful Oops](#) by Barney Saltzberg
- [Flight School](#) by Lita Judge
- [The Water Princess](#) by Susan Verde
- [Leo The Late Bloomer](#) by Robert Kraus
- [Dream Big](#), Little Pig by Kristi Yamaguchi

Videos:

- [The Very Busy Spider](#) - A spider works diligently to spin her web. Despite numerous animals trying to distract her, she perseveres to finish the job.
- [Of Thee I Sing](#) - In a touching letter to his daughters, Barack Obama chronicles heroes who used Perseverance to shape our world, all the while connecting the gifts of each historical figure with those he sees in his children. The book is a lovely window into how Perseverance has changed our nation as well as a mirror for students to see this possibility in themselves.

FOR YOUR READING:

- Check out [Mindset](#) by Carol Dweck, this [Growth Mindset](#) post, and [Why Mindset Matters](#). Helping children deal with challenges is a big part of Perseverance. Read [this article](#) to learn ways you can help your child cope with challenges.

Perseverance (Grades K-2)

For PurposeFull Families



ACTIVITY:

Set a family mindfulness mantra to help you persevere when you're tempted to give up. Consider these: *Just keep swimming. Stick with it. Keep on keeping on. Change the plan, not the goal. Keep your eye on the prize.* Encourage and help your child to write your family mantra on several 3x5 cards and post them around the house to keep them visible and use them to check in every few days.

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS: The Power of Yet

Watch "The Power Of Yet" as a family and then set an intention to accomplish something that you haven't successfully done (yet) - something that's going to challenge you and stretch your endurance and Perseverance. Maybe it's something like cleaning out a garage, starting a vegetable or flower garden, or purging shelves to donate or share some things you haven't used in a while.

Toughness: 3

Time: 3

Type: Group

That's Puzzling

Putting together a jigsaw puzzle can be a terrific way to sharpen your ability to persevere. Put a 300-piece jigsaw puzzle on the table and invite family members to meet and connect the pieces. How long will it take? Set a timer as a goal-setting tool if you find yourself getting frustrated and tempted to leave the table too quickly. When you finish, try a 500-piece puzzle.

If you don't have a puzzle at home or nearby, work with your child to draw one, cut it up, mix up the pieces, and recreate it together.

Toughness: 2

Time: 3

Type: Group

"Practice Makes Perseverance"

Collaborate with your child or the whole family to set a goal. The goal can be anything that requires regular attention or practice such as:

- Growing a reading level
- Learning to cook a new meal
- Developing a new athletic skill
- Practicing independence (morning routine, homework, preparing for school, managing medication, self advocacy, etc.)
- Investigating your family history to create a family tree

Once you've set the goal, think of 1-3 habits or regular action steps that you will need to achieve your goal. Create a habit tracker and check in daily to track progress.

You can check out this article about how to track habits with kids for inspiration: <https://www.parentmap.com/article/what-is-habit-tracking-kids>

Don't forget to set a habit goal and plan a celebration for meeting it! Achieving your original goal is one reward, but it's helpful to have a reward just for practicing and developing habits, even if you haven't accomplished your end goal...yet!

Toughness: 4

Time: 4

Type: Group

Perseverance Prize

Your family members are going to be working hard on Perseverance this month! Using items around the house, work together to create a "Perseverance Prize." The prize can be awarded to a family member who has been working hard on a goal. Family members should display the prize proudly! When the awarded family member spots another family member using Perseverance, they can pass on the prize to the next person! Keep the prize moving throughout the house to celebrate each other's accomplishments.

Toughness: 1

Time: 1

Type: Partner

Perseverance (Grades 3-5)

For PurposeFull Families



EXPLANATION:

This month we're talking about the trait of Perseverance. The dictionary defines it as: "Persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success." The definition we are using in class is:

Perseverance: the ability to work through situations even when there are obstacles or challenges in the way.

Angela Duckworth is an author and researcher who discovered that the most successful people in our world right now have one big thing in common: their ability to persevere through tough situations. She calls it Grit! In fact, she found that Grit is a higher indicator of success than SAT scores, IQ, or GPA. This month, we are talking about how we respond when things get really hard or when we feel like we've failed or can't do something. Over the next few weeks, there will be stories of inspiring and resilient role models. We will talk about what happens and what our thought process is when we feel frustrated or stumped. We will talk about having a Growth Mindset instead of a Fixed Mindset - to see challenges and failure as an opportunity to learn or try a new path instead of thinking, "I'm just not good at this" or, "If I failed this time, I will fail again next time." People that persevere are people that know failure is just the beginning of new growth or learning!

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Have you ever heard the word stick-to-it-tive-ness? What do you think it means? When have you shown stick-to-it-tive-ness? How did sticking to something show Perseverance? When have you decided not to stick with something? What happened? What did you learn? How, if at all, might you do that differently?
- "Positive self-talk" is when we say encouraging words to ourselves in our minds and sometimes out loud. What does positive self-talk have to do with Perseverance? Can you name some examples of positive self-talk that you can use when faced with a challenge? Examples:
 - Even though this is tough, I am going to keep trying.
 - If it gets too hard, I can ask for help.
 - Sometimes things don't go as planned and that's ok.
- Share a personal story of Perseverance with your child. What were your challenges? What or who helped you persevere? What tangible steps did you take? What lesson did you learn?

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- What do you think the expression, "Go slow to go fast" means? How could you apply it to the last project you did? How about the next project you'll do? How could we apply it to our chores at home? To keeping the house clean? To straightening our rooms? How about in our relationships?
- How would you teach someone to persevere? What would it look like?
- What's a challenge for you right now? What's the hardest part? What are some resources - people, strategies, tools, inspiration - that could help you? What's one step we can take together to overcome this challenge?

APPLICATION:

Books:

- [*Hatchet*](#) by Gary Paulsen
- [*Almost Home*](#) by Joan Bauer
- [*She Persisted Around the World*](#) by Chelsea Clinton
- [*What Do You Do With A Problem?*](#) By Kobi Yamada
- [*The Most Magnificent Thing*](#) by Ashley Spires
- [*Leo The Lightning Bug*](#) by Eric Drachman
- [*The Tortoise and the Hare*](#) by Jerry Pinkney

FOR YOUR READING:

- [*Mindset*](#) by Carol Dweck
- [*10 Big Ideas from Mindset*](#)
- [*Stop keeping score: learn instead*](#)
- [*Why "good job!" is the Worst Kind of Praise*](#)

Perseverance (Grades 3-5)

For PurposeFull Families



ACTIVITY:

Work together to create an "I Will" statement to help your children live out the value of Perseverance. For example: "I will fall down 10 times and get up 11." Once they have their own "I Will" intentions, invite them to write them down and post them on the bathroom mirror that they use, so they can see it and be reminded every time they brush their teeth.

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

Unlocking Fixed Mindsets

A hallmark of having a "Growth Mindset" is persevering through challenges and mistakes to adopt an "I can" mindset and attitude. Work together as a family to unlock some fixed mindsets. Come up with a few of your own fixed mindsets to unlock, then focus this week to change I cannots to I cans:

I can't do math.
I stink at science.
I'm not that smart.
I'm not a good writer.
I'll never spell very well.
I am not an artist because I can't draw well.

Toughness: 2

Time: 1

Type: Group

Book Scavenger Hunt

Go through the books in your home or at the local library to find stories with a Perseverance theme. Set a timer and see who can find the most in a desired time frame (we suggest 15 minutes). Meet back in the living room or the middle of the library and share what you found, giving support for how each book showcases Perseverance.

Toughness: 4

Time: 4

Type: Partner

Perseverance Posters

Part of practicing perseverance is setting specific goals and developing action steps to work towards them!

Optional materials: You can gather a bunch of magazines or newspapers - you can often find inexpensive ones from local thrift stores or libraries - and print out images from online or use your own craft supplies to draw your own images!

Each member of the family should have a piece of paper or poster. Each person should choose a goal they want to work towards and an image to represent the goal. Really focus on an image that shows not only the accomplishment but how it will feel as well. Place the image in the middle of the paper. Then cut out and glue or draw images that show all of the action steps you will take to get there all around your goal. You can also glue or draw words of inspiration and encouragement. When your collages are done, share them with the rest of the family and place them together somewhere everyone can see them regularly. Now not only do you have a goal and action plan, but you have accountability partners to check in with you and motivate you to practice Perseverance!

Toughness: 3

Time: 4

Type: Flexible

Accomplishing the Impossible!

Can you fit your whole body through an index card? While it sounds impossible, with the correct folding and cutting technique, you can make it happen! Give each family member a 4x6 index card and a pair of scissors. Tip: Have extra index cards on hand to allow family members to make multiple attempts! Ready for the answer? Read the directions here: <https://www.wikihow.com/Fit-Your-Body-Through-an-Index-Card> for the solution.

Toughness: 3

Time: 1

Type: Group