

## SECRET # 4 - PERSISTENCE AND COMMITMENT

*“NOTHING IN THE WORLD can take the place of persistence.  
Talent will not; Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.  
Genius will not, unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.  
Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.  
Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.  
The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”*

*Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933) 30th U.S. President*

We live in a world of instant coffee, instant breakfast, drive through donut outlets, and drive through banks. We have fast food outlets and TV dinners. We have home delivery. We have express lanes on our super highways. Everything we desire has to happen quickly or it does not work for us.

Have you ever watched an old late night movie and as you looked closely saw a current day movie star? How young they looked back then (when that particular film was released)! They are hardly recognizable when compared to who they are now. It is hard to believe that the star making millions of dollars today only had a bit part in a poorly made film back then. In fact they act nothing like the polished stars they are now. You wonder how they possibly made it.

Have you seen a band in concert that has just had a huge hit. We think they are overnight sensations. Millions of records or cds fly off the shelves of music stores. Their music is played over and over again on the radio stations. You see the band on every talk or music program playing their music and attracting all kinds of fans and attention. Then you hear about how they had been touring for years and had a list of songs a mile long that they have written and you have never heard of.

The above are examples of **PERSISTENCE**. Persistence is a key ingredient in getting to where you want to go. The actor was persistent in playing parts and roles that would be demeaning to him or her today. The band was persistent in playing in places no one else would dare to play in. They were persistent in releasing songs that recording companies would not accept or take on.

I remember a business that I once started. It started as a part-time endeavour. In the first year I made sales of four thousand dollars. In the second year I doubled that to eight thousand. I then made it my full time job. That year my sales were \$16,000 dollars. At this point I decided to pack it in. The income was not enough to ‘waste’ my time doing this any longer. Several years later I returned to the town where I had my business. The number of people now involved in the same type of business had increased substantially and all were doing well. Why did they succeed and I did not? They did the one thing that I did not. They persisted. On average it takes a start up business three years to break even. Up to this point you are usually not even making a profit. It takes persistence to make it all the way.

Persistence is never giving up until you have made it. It is not stopping at the first sign of failure or trouble. It is the motivation to go beyond the failures to the successes that wait beyond all the effort that must come first. Overnight successes are truly rare. If you take a closer look behind that success you will usually find years of work and effort. You will find tears and cheers. Never judge a book by its cover. The same can be said for success.

A strong ally of persistence is **COMMITMENT**. Do you know someone like this? This person seems to have a new idea every week, each one better than the last. Every time you meet them they have just created the greatest thing since white bread. In fact, what they are about to become involved with is so great that everyone should try it. So they begin. For a month all you hear about is this great idea or concept. They get business cards and letterhead. They keep you abreast of every latest development. Suddenly the phone calls start to dwindle and eventually stop. That is, stop until you hear about the next great thing. Then you scratch your head and wonder what happened to the last idea.

Or have you known someone that would always talk about what they are about to do. “Well I am going to do this and then I’m going to do that.” The “what they are going to do” is constantly changing but what remains the same is their lives. Oh, they will tell you how they have a new plan and have turned a corner but it is the same corner they are turning around over and over again, yet they never seem to move ahead.

Both these people lack one thing, commitment. The commitment to stick to a plan or an idea is the major theme missing in many of our lives. Yes we would like our life to be changed, to be different, to be better. Yet we do not have the commitment to do so. So what does commitment look like? Commitment is the moving ahead with an idea and sticking to the plan until its completion. Commitment will lead to completion. It will lead to change, difference and a better life.

Those that lead successful lives are committed to their endeavours. They have a vision of what they want, by when, and how it will be achieved. They have a plan and a commitment to completion of that plan.

A good example of persistence and commitment that I have in my life is my life partner. My spouse did not complete high school, at the time when most of us would have. Her life became de-railed due in part to the fact that she had a large number of younger siblings she helped take care of and that her mother passed away at an earlier age. Undaunted my wife took high school upgrading courses later in life. Time passed and then she started to take university education courses on a part-time basis. She started to take one or two courses at a time, sometimes skipping a course due to her job commitments and other life events. When she moved three thousand miles away from where she grew up she continued to take courses at a different university. Returning eight years later she resumed her curriculum at the university where it had all began. She has now graduated from university. It took my partner almost twenty years to complete what some people complete in three or four years. Do you have this type of commitment and persistence? If you have a burning desire you do.

Here is an excellent poem on commitment by Van Goethe. It speaks volumes.

### COMMITMENT

Until one is committed  
there is hesitancy.....  
the chance to draw back...  
always ineffectiveness  
concerning all acts  
of initiative and creation.

there is ONE elementary truth,  
the ignorance of which kills  
countless ideas & splendid plans;  
that the moment  
one definitely commits oneself  
the providence moves too.

all sorts of things occur  
to help one that would  
never otherwise have occurred.

a whole stream of events  
issue from the decision  
raising in favour all manner of  
unforeseen incidents and meetings  
and material assistance  
which no man could have ever dreamed  
would have come his way.

whatever you can do  
or dream you can...begin it.

Boldness has Genius  
Power and Magic in it.

Begin it NOW.

There is one caution that I will include with this secret. This is what I call the “When Then” Syndrome. It goes something like this... “When I become successful I will take time off for vacation.” “When I finish this project at work I will spend more time with my family.” “When I finish the work around the house I will take some time for myself.” Invariable the when never happens because you are caught up in the cycle of “when then.” You will ALWAYS find something to keep you busy and as a result the THEN never happens. Years later you will find yourself still not taking the vacation you have always wanted, or spending little or no time with the family and you absolutely never have time to do anything that you would qualify as “doing something for myself.”

Some of the possible outcomes of the “When Then” Syndrome include possible burnout and ill health, getting to where you want to get to, but only after your children have moved away and they then have no time for you; losing your life partner who never had their companion around; or you could spend your whole lifetime playing ‘When Then’ and never get to the “Then.” So what have you gained? In the introduction I speak about balance in your life and in your approach to attaining and achieving success. Be aware of, and look out for the “When Then” Syndrome in yourself and in others that you know and love and realize that balance helps eliminate this particular issue.

Commitment is the starter’s key to a different story or life. Commitment is not here today gone tomorrow. It is sticking with an idea or concept until its fruition. It is staying until the end and then being there for the clean up because you have committed to the cause.

Think back, what things are you or have you been committed to? Let me help by rephrasing this a little bit. What have you completed in your life that you started and totally finished. As an example you may say that you finished public school, high school, college, or university. If it wasn’t school maybe it was a job or a task. Remember something that you can definitely say you were committed to getting done and you did.

All of us have been committed to something in our lifetime otherwise we would not be here. Choosing to be here on this planet is a commitment to life.

Remember this is not a race. The glue that holds persistence and commitment together is consistency. Consistency is doing things in an orderly fashion until the task is completed. Doing “it” over and over again, until the desired result is met. Consistency is not trying to do everything in a day or week but having a plan that is generous in its allowance for things that may go bump in the night, in other words things that could go wrong. “Contingency” or what if planning assists us in making the road to success and achievement less bumpy. A commitment log is included at the bottom of this section to assist you in documenting your commitments.

## **EXERCISE:**

What other commitments have you made? List other commitments you have made and met. The listing allows you to see that you have been committed to something previously. Listing previous successes will help you recognize that you have had previous successes.

On a piece of paper list what you are committed to for right now and in the future. Review this list monthly to refresh your memory. If this is one of the weak areas hindering your success read the list more frequently.

If you have a problem in making commitments then start with small ones that you can keep. Succeeding in the completion of smaller commitments will allow you to develop the confidence to take on greater ones. HINT: Start small and work your way up to larger commitments.

A sample item on your list may look as follows. "I commit on a weekly basis to take out the trash by 8:00 am on garbage collection day."

Do not forget to measure how well you do. It is the measuring that will allow you to gauge where you are and whether you are ready for bigger commitments. A commitment log is shown on the next page.

