

Life is full of obstacles and stumbling blocks, and many people wonder how to conquer these foes. A valuable Madagascan proverb states “Nothing is so difficult that diligence cannot master it.” With diligence, a person can accomplish anything he sets his mind to. What is diligence? According to Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, diligence is “Steady application in business of any kind; constant effort to accomplish what is undertaken...” Once diligence is mastered, no task will be too hard or too long to accomplish.

In 1620, the Pilgrims landed at Cape Cod and founded Plymouth colony. Although the end result was a prosperous, flourishing colony, many dangers and difficulties, trials and tribulations were first experienced by the Pilgrims in their fight for internal religious liberty. Their troubles first began in England, where they were persecuted for their faith. After escaping from England, the Pilgrims sailed to Holland where they hoped to make a living. From this point on, diligence had to be a key aspect of their character. Without knowing the language or manner of trade, the Pilgrims had to survive in the midst of Holland. Later, in the New World, the Pilgrims were obliged to suffer the harsh winter without proper food, clothing, or shelter. Working diligently to conquer these obstacles, the Pilgrims eventually established the prosperous colony of Plymouth.

Historically, some of our founding fathers have clearly portrayed this characteristic of diligence, specifically Thomas Jefferson. When first asked to draft the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson refused and recommended that John Adams shoulder the task, as Adams was a better writer. Eventually, persuaded by his fellow Americans, Jefferson took upon himself the load of writing one of nation’s most important documents. This task would be very difficult

and tedious sometimes, as each phrase and each word had to be carefully thought out so that America's statement of liberty would mean exactly what the founders wanted it to mean. Diligence was mandatory. Long hours of intense concentration would weigh Jefferson down for a while, but diligence exceeded all other aspects and helped this great writer accomplish such a long, hard task.

Shortly after Jefferson, Noah Webster, father of the American Dictionary, completed his long and arduous task of writing his *1828 American Dictionary of the English Language*. Started in 1807, this monumental task took him eighteen years to complete! Nothing but diligence kept Webster writing this dictionary. For eighteen long years, Noah Webster spent every moment in his room researching, thinking, and writing. Every day he was committed to this task and slowly saw the end come into focus. Although he was ridiculed and slandered and discouraged from all sides, he ignored all comments and diligently worked until the end. Finally, in January of 1825, Webster wrote the last word in his dictionary and gave America one of her greatest gifts—an American dictionary—all because of his diligence.

A motivated spirit is needed to start a hard task; a diligent spirit is needed to finish it. With diligence, a person can overcome many obstacles and achieve many goals in life. Without it, life will just be a road full of obstacles, and upon hitting one, a person will fall down and turn back. However, “nothing is so difficult that diligence cannot master it.” One person, with diligence, can achieve greater goals than a hundred people without diligence. Diligence can conquer any task. Diligence achieves the impossible. Diligence secures victory.