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English 101 033

19 April 2018

The Power of Perseverance

In Bill Strickland's memoir, *Make the Impossible Possible*, there are many defining character strengths that he possesses. The CEO of Manchester-Bidwell, a job training program and arts center for youth located in inner-city Pittsburgh, had one quality that stuck out to me, perseverance. The VIA website defines perseverance as, "the voluntary continuation of a goal-directed action despite the presence of challenges, difficulties, and discouragement. The author shares a multitude of inspiring stories and refreshing perspectives that not only teach a lesson, but also show his defining quality of being able to overcome problems and difficulties. Bill

these things that plague his surroundings. There are multiple different times that Strickland could've gave up, but he keeps going and rises to the challenge every time. He wants to be proud of the man he looks back at in the mirror and be the kind of man that's able to overcome abstract obstacles.

At the beginning of the memoir the author describes Manchester as “an unbroken landscape of decay that taught indelible lessons about hopelessness and defeat no matter where my gaze fell” (29). It's clear that Manchester was one of Bill Strickland's biggest obstacles that weighed on his heart and weakened his character. One of the ways he begins to overcome this obstacle is with the simplicity of clay. In chapter two, Strickland tells us the origins of where his love for clay came from. In high

Center a place that welcomed students and made them feel like they were more than the darkness the ghetto tried to convince them they were. He cleaned the building up, straightened up the employees, and even connected with IBM to make a new training program, but Bidwell's financial needs seemed to make things hopeless. Soon the stress began to weigh on Bill and his sense of character faded into the darkness. "My mood turned dark. I was difficult to be around. I had forced myself to show up at the office. The only place I felt like myself was in the dim light of the Shamrock Inn, a neighborhood bar" (86). All hope seemed lost, but Strickland's perseverance shined through like a beacon of hope. He muscled up some courage and with his enlightened character he started to find funding throughout his impressive network of friends. Strickland built a whole entire new building, ran on dreams and passion. The new building was called Manchester Bidwell, and Bill Strickland wouldn't had been able to overcome the abstract obstacle of his doubt and self-pity without his will to persevere. "my whole life led up to this place, how my restless quest to live a life that mattered had forced me to mine a lifetime of emotional experience, make sense of it, draw a vision from it, then find the knowledge, skill partnerships, and perseverance I needed to make that vision real" (103). Not all the author's obstacles were all abstract, and he was also faced with physical challenges.

Throughout his memoir, Strickland was constantly plagued with physical difficulties. When it came to the author going after his dreams and developing his passions, there were many

wanted to live a life he was proud of and the life involved jumping over a few obstacles on the way.

One of the major things the author overcame was funding issues with a side of government issues. Towards the end of the book Strickland had become infatuated with the idea of orchids and decided that Manchester Bidwell needed a greenhouse. He wanted to share his

He fought and fought for funding, but many times his fight was answered with, "I'm sorry, Bill, I