THE HARE AND TORTOISE

Once upon a time, there was a hare who loved to boast of his speed in front of the other animals. “I have never yet been beaten when I put forth my full speed. I challenge anyone here to race with me.” The tortoise said quietly, “I accept your challenge.”

All the animals were surprised that the tortoise took up the challenge. He was known to be a very slow animal. “That is a good joke,” said the hare. “I could dance around you all the way.” “Refrain from boasting until you have beaten me,” confidently answered the tortoise. “Shall we race?”

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The tortoise plodded on and plodded on. He had a goal, he had a focus and he never looked back. When the hare awoke from his nap, he saw the tortoise near the finish line and could not run up in time to save the race. That day, all the animals learned a very important lesson from the tortoise:

LIFE LESSON: Slow but steady progress wins the race.

As you go through school, there will be many things that may seem very difficult to achieve, if not impossible. Whether it’s studying for a test, writing a research paper, preparing for AP exams and the SAT, performing in the school play, or training for the state championship, these are things that require commitment, diligence, and perseverance to achieve successfully.

The moral of Aesop’s fable is that if you keep plugging away at something, like the tortoise, you will eventually get there. Similarly, whatever school task you take on or career path you undertake, proceed steadily and laboriously with it, and you will eventually get there.

In contrast with slow and steady progress, procrastination is surely to lead to failure. If you delay or postpone doing something, like the hare, you may not get to the finish line on time. So avoid idleness, and do not neglect what needs to be done. Unlike the hare, finish the course without deviating and loitering.

Action is the business of life. Every delay is destructive; it causes irreparable lost time. You cannot complete a task or get to the end of your journey on time if you constantly fall asleep on the way. Effort, hard work, and determination will get you punctually to the end.

Remember, when confronting the impossible, success is achieved through slow but steady progress. Your commitment, diligence, and perseverance will be rewarded. If you put in the effort, you will get the reward. If not, you won’t.
THE FOX AND THE LION by AESOP

A Fox who had never yet seen a Lion, when he fell in with him by a certain chance for the first time in the forest, was so frightened that he was near dying with fear. On his meeting with him for the second time, he was still much alarmed, but not to the same extent as at first. On seeing him the third time, he so increased in boldness that he went up to him, and commenced a familiar conversation with him.

LIFE LESSON: Acquaintance softens prejudices.

Like the Fox, many of us experience a feeling of apprehension or nervousness in a new situation or in the presence of others we are unacquainted with. We are scared of doing or saying what we want to out of fear of being laughed at, humiliated or rejected by our classmates. To our detriment, anxiety or fear that something bad or unpleasant will happen prevents us from making new friends or participating in school activities.

The truth is that we all have fear. What matters is how we face it. You have two choices: Be frightened by it, or face it bravely and boldly. Bravery is having fear but confronting it. Being bold requires not hesitating or being fearful in the face of actual or possible rebuff (a rude or ungracious rejection). Therefore, being brave and bold requires a willingness to do or say what you want to despite the risks of rejection or humiliation.

The formula for success is simple: practice, then more practice. Practicing makes things easier to do because we get good at doing something the more we practice. Without practice, there can be no triumph. In short, practice makes perfect!

Accordingly, instead of avoiding an unpleasant situation, practice being bold. Train yourself to be brave. Do not hesitate! Just do it! The key to mastering fear is to not hesitate. With practice, you will become much more comfortable at taking risks in new social situations. With each experience, whether it is making a new friend, having a difficult conversation with a friend, or expressing your feelings to someone, you will become less afraid of it.

So be bold, face fear without hesitation. Be brave! Take risks! Remember, there is no reward without risk. In life, the doors will be opened to those who are bold enough to knock.
THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest. "Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?" "I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same." "Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper, "we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew:

LIFE LESSON: Prepare today for the needs that you will have tomorrow.

This fable highlights the virtues of hard work and planning for the future, as well as, the perils of improvidence and the consequences of laziness. The lesson to be learned is to think ahead, and plan and prepare for the future.

There is no secret to success. It is the result of preparation and hard work. Preparation is the process of becoming ready for something. As you mature, you will soon discover that hard work is always rewarded.

We often think about why we did not pass a test, get a job or a leadership position, or win a contest or match. We would like to think it was a matter of bad luck. But there is no such thing as bad luck in life. It is a matter of planning and preparation, and hard work. Success is the product of your work and effort.

As Benjamin Franklin appropriately said, “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” Accordingly, avoid the bad habits of laziness (unwilling to work or lack of effort) and improvidence (not having the ability to predict what will be needed in the future).

Remember, in life you have two choices: work or play. There is a time for work and a time for play. The decisions you make today have consequences in the future. The ants prepared for the future. The Grasshopper who did not suffered in the winter months.

The moral of the story is that just because you do not need something right now does not mean you should put it off. It is okay to take time to enjoy the fun things in life, but do not wait to write that essay the day it's due, study for an exam the night before, or start preparing for a career after graduation. Stop procrastinating, think ahead, and always be prepared for what's ahead.

Value the importance of thinking ahead. The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today's work. Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement, especially regarding your career, and the quality of life for you and your family.
THE CROW AND THE PITCHER by AESOP

A Crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a Pitcher which had once been full of water; but when the Crow put its beak into the mouth of the Pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it. He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. He repeated this process many more times. At last, at last, he saw the water mount up near him, and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

LIFE LESSON: Little by little does the trick.

At one point or another in our existence, we have to face seemingly insurmountable challenges or apparently impossible situations. This is a reality of life: At every step in our journey through earth, from infancy to adulthood, life will throw unexpected and unpleasant challenges and difficulties that will constantly test our endurance and stamina.

**Persistence**—which is firm continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition—is the key to solving any problem you have. Persistence requires both endurance and stamina. **Endurance** is the power of enduring an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way. **Stamina** is the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort.

The Crow exhibited the quality of persistence, and demonstrated that when confronting a seemingly insurmountable challenge, **little by little does the trick**.

Similarly, all the challenges and problems you face in school can be overcome with persistence, one step at a time. In any effort, persistence guarantees that the desired results are certain to happen. A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what initially seemed like an insurmountable problem will turn to triumphant success.

Always be persistent in your pursuits. You will discover that persistence always pays off. Whether you want to get an A on an exam, be elected president of your club or captain of your team, pass your college entrance exams, or learn to play an instrument or speak a language, persist until you succeed. Even in romantic endeavors, persistence matters, for the art of love is largely the art of persistence. Whatever it is that you want to do, just keep plugging away, **little by little**. **A river cuts through rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence**.

**Everything worthwhile takes time.** It is important that you don’t give up when things get bad. You can do anything you want as long as you stick to it long enough. As Confucius rightly stated, “It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.” So develop a definite purpose and a definite plan, for persistence is the path to success.
THE FOX AND THE GOAT BY AESOP

A Fox one day fell into a deep well and could find no means of escape. A Goat, overcome with thirst, came to the same well, and seeing the Fox, inquired if the water was good. Concealing his sad plight under a merry guise, the Fox indulged in a lavish praise of the water, saying it was excellent beyond measure, and encouraging him to descend. The Goat, mindful only of his thirst, thoughtlessly jumped down, but just as he drank, the Fox informed him of the difficulty they were both in and suggested a scheme for their common escape. "If," said he, "you will place your forefeet upon the wall and bend your head, I will run up your back and escape, and will help you out afterwards." The Goat readily assented and the Fox leaped upon his back. Steadying himself with the Goat's horns, he safely reached the mouth of the well and made off as fast as he could. When the Goat upbraided him for breaking his promise, he turned around and cried out, "You foolish old fellow! If you had as many brains in your head as you have hairs in your beard, you would never have gone down before you had inspected the way up, nor have exposed yourself to dangers from which you had no means of escape."

LIFE LESSONS: Look before you leap. Do nothing without a regard to the consequences.

We often want to blame others for the bad things that are happening to us. But others don’t cause our misfortunes (bad luck) or troubles. A person’s misfortunes and troubles are due to his or her own actions. When you choose your behavior (through your actions), you choose your consequences.

The first rule of life is that every action has a consequence. Therefore, everything in life is action and consequence. By definition, a consequence is a result or effect of an action. This is a very important lesson to understand: You are free to make whatever choice you want, but you are not free from the consequences of that choice.

The consequences of the choices you make can change your life. The actions you take can be devastating (cause someone severe and overwhelming grief), harmful, or fatal. For example, unprotected sex can result in an unwanted pregnancy. Drug abuse can lead to drug addiction, serious bodily injury or death, or poor academic performance. Failure to submit homework or projects on time, and to prepare for exams, will affect your chances of graduation and going to college. If you betray the trust of others (i.e., you lie or gossip), you will likely lose their trust and respect, and perhaps their friendship; even worse, this might lead to retribution (punishment considered fully deserved). Unfortunately for many, these personal, social, and academic consequences are something that they will regret for the rest of their life. Therefore, be sure of what you do before you do it because sometimes it cannot be undone.

A wise person will debate every advantage and disadvantage before beginning a course of action. Good judgment requires that we deliberate (fully consider and done in an unhurried way) and leave nothing to chance. Know that to a large extent, your future is determined by the decisions and actions you make today, including your future career and quality of life.

Before you commit to something, think first about what you are getting into. Exercise caution, that is, care taken to avoid danger or mistakes. As often said, “Check yourself before you wreck yourself!”
THE HUNTER AND THE WOODMAN by AESOP

A HUNTER, not very bold, was searching for the tracks of a Lion. He asked a man felling oaks in the forest if he had seen any marks of his footsteps or knew where his lair was. "I will," said the man, "at once show you the Lion himself." The Hunter, turning very pale and chattering with his teeth from fear, replied, "No, thank you. I did not ask that; it is his track only I am in search of, not the Lion himself."

LIFE LESSON: The hero is brave in deeds as well as words.

In our dealings with one another we are often like this hunter. We profess (claim openly) that we stand for something but when the full implication of what we profess stares us in the face we draw back (choose not to do something that was expected of us to do). A hero is brave in deeds as well as words.

This fable is a cautionary story against hypocrisy, that is, the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which our own behavior does not conform.

We all have the opportunity to be heroes. In school, we will all face difficult situations that require difficult actions. They are difficult because they can cause us hardships at school or problems with our friends.

In school, you will see or know about bullying. You might witness others being peer pressured into doing something they don’t want to do, like drinking, smoking, or sex. You will experience the mean treatment of others, that is, another student engaging in behavior that is unkind (inconsiderate and harsh), spiteful (intention to do evil), unfair (not just), or vicious (cruel or violent), such as someone saying mean things or jokes about someone else.

There is no question that intervening to prevent something like this from being done is very difficult, and requires considerable bravery. It is difficult because we fear that if we intervene we will lose our own social status in school or risk becoming victims ourselves.

But this is exactly what being brave in deeds is about. For those of us who believe in justice, fairness, and kindness toward others, we have a moral obligation to act. This requires considerable courage because we have to not be deterred by the considerable hardship, disapproval or risk that might follow from standing up for our moral standards or beliefs.

Being a hero is not easy. Think of all the heroes who fought for human rights, or for political, economic, or social equality. We admire them for their brave deeds. We respect them because they helped other people and made a positive difference in their life.

Every student deserves to be comfortable, safe, and happy while learning in school. Have the moral courage to act to help ensure the safety and well-being of others who are unable to stand up for themselves. Be a hero today!