

Three Minute REBT: Values in REBT

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Three-Minute REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy): Persistence as a Value

by Philip Tate, Ph.D., Member, SMART® Board of Directors, and Editor, *News & Views*

In REBT we emphasize several values, such as knowing yourself, being responsible for your actions, and being tolerant of yourself when you make mistakes. Persistence is another. It can be one of your most important values to follow.

Once you've decided on a goal, you believe it will gain you happiness and less misery, and it probably will. Let's say that you get started toward your goal, then get frustrated, become hesitant, and quit. That's hardly a prescription for healthy and happy living.

What's lacking? Persistence: the desire and will to follow through.

Often you may give up when you see others who have it easier than you do because of their greater intelligence, talent, beauty or fortune. Or you may simply become overly frustrated and bored, then become discouraged. Finally you quit. That's sad, because continuing gives you a better chance to get what you want.

Thomas Edison captured well the value of persistence when he stated that genius is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. He often slept only 4 hours per night, keeping a bed in his laboratory to minimize the time away from working. Though he was intelligent enough to create the phonograph on the first try, he took over 5,000 documented trials to invent the electric battery.

Holding out such an accomplished person as an example may seem out of place because few of us can hope to do as well. However, the process of reaching a goal is often the same, so we all will achieve our goals mostly as others do: through

perseverance. When we are frustrated and bored, we will press on. When we are working with a handicap, we will keep working. When we feel it's just not our day, we will continue. With that we may gain as much happiness with our efforts as did Edison.

To adopt persistence as a value, assess your preferences and decide on a goal. You may decide to quit your addictive behavior, to achieve more at work, or to do better with your mate. Whatever your goal, it's important not to compare yourself with others who succeed except for the purpose of seeing that because you are human like them, you may achieve happiness like them. Then begin working toward your goal and press on. Push through your frustrations by reaffirming the value of persistence and keeping your pace. Then enjoy your successes, and continue for more.

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