

## Building Perseverance in Teens

Perseverance – also referred to as grit, tenacity, or resilience – is the ability to overcome setbacks in order to accomplish a goal. Why is it important? Recent research is showing the positive impact of perseverance on a person’s overall success; people with more grit are more likely to graduate high school, stay married, and keep a job. Your high schooler has been building their ability to persevere their entire life by overcoming small obstacles along the way. For example, when they learned to walk, to ride a bike, and to read. By continuing to help your teen deal with challenges, failure, and setbacks, you can help them develop the ability to persevere and accomplish their goals in the future.

Encourage your high schooler to have new experiences. Getting out of their comfort zone will allow them the opportunity to struggle and build perseverance. This could mean joining a new extracurricular activity, getting a job, or volunteering in the community. As your teen continues to broaden their experiences, they’ll be more comfortable with taking on new challenges and may find they are more capable than they thought they were.

Take the time to point out moments in your teen’s life when they struggled and persevered. One great example to share is simply when they were learning to walk. It takes all children time to learn to stand on their own two feet, and it’s a good reminder for your teen when they are frustrated with the time it is taking them to accomplish a goal or learn a new skill. You can also add when they mastered something that was difficult, like learning to ride a bike, skateboard, or play guitar. Also share with them, times when you or other family members struggled and persevered.

Talk to your teen about goals that they haven’t met. Tom Hoerr, Head of School at New City School in St. Louis, says goals should require effort and skill, but there’s not always a guarantee that they’ll be met. How your child responds to failure and frustration is critical. Tom uses the phrase “good failures” to describe failures that your child learns from, and that help them succeed in the future. The ability to get back in the game – to bounce back from mistakes or setbacks – is key to developing resilience and perseverance. You can also demonstrate resilience in your reactions to your teen’s setbacks. For example, if they bring home a bad grade on a test, instead of punishing them, try working with them on a solution so they can perform better on the next test.

*Adapted from:* <https://www.today.com/parenting-guides/building-perseverance-teens-t177667>

