

The Inspiring Legend of the Boy and the Starfish – A Story about Perseverance

There are many studies that have focused on pinpointing what is the common trait among the great men and women who have inspired humanity. Everything seems to indicate that the most decisive virtue is perseverance. **Many of history's great accomplishments are an inspiring lesson of tenacity and struggle against adversity.**

Perseverance is a very complex virtue, almost a gift.

When it's authentic, it feeds the tenacity and willpower felt in the face of challenges and obstacles. In order to maintain that iron will against adversity, it's necessary to know what you want, where you wish to go and why. Usually, this is the result of a process of reflection and forging of one's character.

"The art of beating great difficulties is studied and acquired through the habit of confronting small ones." -
Cristina Trivulzio di Belgioioso

Those who think that great feats take shape from the very beginning are quite wrong. **In general, everything begins with a small seed that you need to keep watering.** This seed then grows and expands until it reaches a point where it undertakes its own path of growth. The legend of the boy and the starfish explains precisely and simply what perseverance is all about.

A realistic and inspiring legend

There once was a man who lived near the beach. Every day he would wake up and the first thing he would do was to take a walk along the shore. On a day like any other, he was surprised by what he found on this particular morning's escapade. **There were dozens of starfish all over the beach. It was very strange.** Maybe the bad weather or the November winds were responsible for this phenomenon.



The man looked sadly at the situation. **He knew that the starfish would not survive more than five days out of the water. All of these creatures would die shortly** if they weren't already dead. As he walked among them, *"How sad!"* he thought. However, he couldn't think of an inspiring solution.

Upon walking a bit further down the beach, he saw a boy who was running around in the sand. He seemed sweaty and distressed. *"What are you doing?"*, the man asked the boy. **"I'm returning all of the starfish to the ocean,"** the boy responded. He looked quite tired.

The man thought for a moment. The task the boy was taking on seemed absurd to him. He couldn't help but speak his mind. *"What you're doing is useless. I've been walking for quite a while and there are thousands of starfish. This makes no sense,"* he pointed out. **The boy, who was holding a starfish in his hands, responded, "Hey! It sure makes sense to this one!"**



Small actions, great deeds

The inspiring legend of the boy and the starfish shows us the value of small actions and perseverance. Sometimes we don't see the value in the modest tasks we perform. This happens because we aren't focusing our behaviour on the value of things. Instead, we focus on the result. **It's as if we saw the world in terms of quantity and size, instead of meaning and essence.**

Every great deed begins with small actions. In fact, beginnings tend to be hard and costly. Hence, someone who has a hard time seeing the meaning of a flower will find it difficult to understand nature.

Therefore, someone who dismisses the meaning of a small sacrifice will most likely not make an effort. We strengthen our characters through small restrictions and discrete discipline. **The first big obstacles for big dreams are the little signs of skepticism from the people around you.** Giving meaning to the small is an inspiring way of living.

Perseverance is, above all, a descendant of values. You need to have real conviction to resist the difficulties and setbacks which are always present when you set a valuable goal. The worst part is that often we let ourselves be invaded by a totalitarian thought. **A thought which tells that if you don't have "everything", then you have "nothing".** In turn, this mental scheme is poisonous for your motivation.

If you associate your big dreams and aspirations with human values, it will be much easier for you to find the strength you need to keep moving forward. On the other hand, **if you concentrate solely on immediate results, it's likely that frustration will become your shadow.** Great cathedrals are built brick by brick, stone by stone. The inspiring legend of the boy and the starfish tells us that small actions do make sense and have meaning. The truth is that it's worthwhile to start seeing life this way.

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Please take a moment to reflect upon the small things that you can do to make a difference, whether it be for yourself or others or the world around you.