**MODULE 3**

**Class Title**: Perseverance

**Aim of the lesson**: To understand the importance of pursuing our choices despite hurdles and obstacles with steadfastness.

**Category**: Personal Development

**Lesson Format**: Power point presentation, discussion and a handout

(Greeting to students*) Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

*(Taooz) Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

*(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

*(Du’a) Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah at Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

Whoa! Such a long word! Can I hear you guys say it?

Just like its spelling and pronunciation, its meaning has longevity and continuity to it. Perseverance is the quality that allows someone to continue trying to achieve even though it is difficult. It is the continued effort in something you want to do despite facing problems.

In simple words – Perseverance is sticking to it, no matter what! Not quitting because of difficulty. Let us call it stick-ability.

Watch this little video clip **(Play video clip 1, girl getting on pony)**

Slide 2:

Now that is stickability.

You and I need this stickability every day of our lives. Whatever you do, when armed with the remarkable quality of perseverance or as we are calling it – stick-ability, your success is almost guaranteed.

Unfortunately, many people rob themselves of any success because they do not have the perseverance to see their goals through. They just do not stick to it. Developing perseverance is very much possible if you are prepared to put in some effort.

You go to school? Daily? Good. Do you want to go every day? Are there days when you would rather sleep in and chill? Of course, there are. That is when you need stickability – get up! school time, must go!

You are awful at a subject – say Math or Physics. Two courses of action – give up and say “failing is my fate” or work hard every day, revise twice as much and try harder consistently, get your stick-ability going and you will see a huge difference. You may still not get that A star, but your grades **will** improve, and you **will** have greater confidence in your own self.

Religion also requires us to stick to obligations such as *salah*, fasting, being good, respectful etc. Also, if any of you decides to be a practical *muslimah* in terms of appearance, you may have difficulties at first, but you got to STICK TO IT!! That is PERSEVERANCE!

Slide 3:

Perseverance or stick-ability requires patience and courage. It comes from within and keeps us going when we stumble, strengthens us in difficulties and assists us in recognizing and reaching our goals.

Let us look at some examples of stick-ability which will hopefully serve as inspiration for us in times of weakness. The take home message is “IF THEY COULD/CAN DO IT, SO CAN I.” *in sha Allah*.

Slide 4:

Now before I start explaining how to adopt this quality, I want you all to think of any one task/duty/habit you guys want to start and stick to. It could be anything, say, adopting a workout routine for as short as 15 minutes like skipping. It can also be reading three ayahs from the Quran each day. Or even helping your mother set and clear up the dinner table.

Now, it is easy to start off something, but the real challenge is doing it persistently and not to give up too easily.

(The teacher then demonstrates the concept of Perseverance through a short demo)

Two students are called up and one is asked to push the other. The girl who is pushed will naturally stumble. The teacher asks the first girl to shove a little harder this time. This will result in the second girl falling on the carpet. Soon after she stands up and resumes her position.

Slide 5:

Teacher: Life gives us shoves and pushes. It is not all roses and rainbows. You may do badly in school sometimes; your friend might ditch you or you may be going through a difficult time on homefront. This will make you stumble, lose focus but getting back on track and accepting it as life’s challenge is Perseverance. It can be in worldy matters or in *deen*i issues too.

Teacher: What did the second girl do when she fell after the harder shove?

Students: She got up.

Teacher: In wrestling; when the opponent falls and refuses to get up, it is declared that?

Student: He is defeated.

Teacher: Yes, so falling is not defeat. It is when you refuse to get up. Same is true in real life wrestling matches of life versus trials.

So, what is it that successful people do that makes them oh-so-good?

Slide 6:

For starters, they sharpen their focus by training their minds and setting a goal. And how is that done you ask? Let us say your goal is to reduce 10kg in the next six months.

Now when you decide to do something, is it not at the back of your mind all the time?

You wake up in the morning and see a flabby belly; it makes you want to do crunches there and then! When you sit down at the breakfast table, you crave those sticky French toasts and piping hot cheese omelets. But the fitness alarm in your mind goes off, snapping you back to your boiled eggs and dry toast. So on, and so forth all day long.

But what about those times when you forget your goal only to remember much later after you have ‘cheated’ on your fitness regime? Yes, you will drown in guilt and feel crummy but remember you must rise above the guilt and try again.

A practical solution to this problem can be to write it down and keep it everywhere- stick it on your mirror, slide it in your pocket, set a daily reminder on your mobile etc. This may seem like a crazy idea at first, but it works because our minds are most receptive to visuals especially for the forgetful ones like me!

Also, it will serve to boost you if you are lazing around. I mean looking at it at least 10-12 times a day, at different places will make you go like, ‘alright! I will get down to it!’

Slide 7:

After sharpening focus and setting a goal; the other thing is building competence. It is important to be armed and well-equipped but most importantly you need to have an action plan. If you were competent enough, you would not have had to struggle in the first place. There are those lucky ducks out there who have this great metabolism rate. Whatever they eat and in whatever quantity, their kilos and inches do not budge. And there are people like me who constantly mentally calculate how many calories, carbs and sugar a treat has. It literally feels like a crime to eat French fries or brownies!

What will you do when a deadly fudgy chocolate cake comes in the house? Will you eat to your heart’s desire at the buffet you are invited to? What about the divine snacks served at Perceptions? You must train yourself to RESIST and then STICK to resisting!

Perhaps you can keep a cheat day once a week or once in two weeks. Or you can work out an extra 20 minutes the day you binge.

Obstacles and challenges may knock you down, but you must pick yourself up again. Think of strategies to apply when they block the path to your goal. Make plans B and C for when the original one fails.

Before heading onto the next strategy, let us break up for a quick activity that will reinforce this point of investing all efforts into the goal.

**Activity**

(Material needed: Balls or balloons. The students stand back to back in pairs with a balloon or ball between them. The goal is to move together till the finish line in such a way that the ball does not fall. Give a second chance to the pairs who failed.)

Teacher:

Were you able to accomplish it successfully the first time? We have limited time so I could only give a second chance, but life gives you unlimited chances! And you should keep on trying till you achieve your goal.

Just like when Dory from Finding Nemo. Said: ‘Just keep swimming, just keep swimming’, (till you achieve your goal!)

Slide 8:

Successful people also keep the passion for achieving their goal alive and kicking!

Read self-help books, true inspiring stories which will move you and push you a little further towards your goal. These days there are blogs and online groups which you can be a part of where you read and share each other’s struggle. Remember the take- home message? IF THEY CAN DO IT, SO CAN I!

On this note, let us watch this motivating clip.

(**Teacher plays Nick Vujicic’s video**)

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Wow! I mean WOW! Can you imagine how many obstacles he must have gone through? I mean it takes us so many attempts to learn how to swim with all our limbs intact *Alhamdulilah* but think how hard it must have been for him.

What struck you the most about him?

(Students share their views)

Teacher: I like his shining personality and super cool confidence which are helpful in becoming resilient.

Slide 9:

Do you think he ever felt dejected and disheartened at his initial failures? Of course! He is a human being after all! Who does not when things do not go as you planned or just as everything was going so smoothly, a certain glitch messes up everything?

Worry wrecks your focus. Everyone takes stress and it is real, but it does not mean there is a point to it. Always remember; much of your worry is based on concerns in your mind, not reality. Mark Twain once said, "I've suffered a great many catastrophes in my life. Most of them never happened."

So, do not fret if you weigh yourself after a month and the needle still does not budge from your original weight!

Be true to yourself. Focus on what you **can** do, not on what you cannot do. You get what you expect so expect the absolute best from yourself. Great success is always rooted in great expectations.

Now let me tell you of an inspiring incident which is laced with conviction and determination.

Slide 10:

In 1867, a creative engineer named John Roebling was inspired by an idea to build a spectacular bridge connecting New York with the Long Island. However, bridge building experts throughout the world thought that this was an impossible feat and told him to forget the idea. It just could not be done. It was not practical. It had never been done before.

John Roebling could not ignore the vision he had in his mind of this bridge. He thought about it all the time and he knew deep in his heart that it could be done. He just had to share the dream with someone else. After much discussion and persuasion, he managed to convince his son Washington Roebling, an up and coming engineer, that the bridge in fact could be built.

Working together for the first time, the father and son developed concepts of how it could be accomplished and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement and inspiration, and the headiness of a wild challenge before them, they hired their crew and began to build their dream bridge.

The project started well, but when it was only a few months underway a tragic accident on the site took the life of John Roebling. Washington Roebling was injured and left with a certain amount of brain damage, which resulted in him not being able to walk or talk or even move.

"We told them so. Crazy men and their crazy dreams. It is foolish to chase wild visions."

Everyone had a negative comment to make and felt that the project should be scrapped since the John Roebling were the only ones who knew how the bridge could be built. Despite his handicap Washington Roebling was never discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge and his mind was still as sharp as ever.

Washington Roebling tried to inspire and pass on his enthusiasm to some of his friends, but they were too daunted by the task. As he lay on his bed in his hospital room, with the sunlight streaming through the windows, a gentle breeze blew the flimsy white curtains apart and he was able to see the sky and the tops of the trees outside for just a moment.

It seemed that there was a message for him not to give up. Suddenly an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving this, he slowly developed a code of communication with his wife Emily.

Washington Roebling touched his wife's arm with that finger, indicating to her that he wanted her to call the engineers again. Then he used the same method of tapping her arm to tell the engineers what to do. It seemed foolish but the project was under way again.

For 13 years Washington Roebling tapped out his instructions with his finger on his wife's arm, until the bridge was finally completed in 1883. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as a tribute to the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not to be defeated by circumstances. It is also a tribute to the engineers and their teamwork, and to their faith in a man who was considered mad by half the world. It stands too as a tangible monument to the love and devotion of his wife who for 13 long years patiently decoded the messages of her husband Washington Roebling and told the engineers what to do.

Perhaps this is one of the best examples of a never-say-die attitude that overcomes a terrible physical handicap and achieves an impossible goal.

Often when we face obstacles in our day-to-day life, our hurdles seem exceedingly small in comparison to what many others face. The Brooklyn Bridge shows us that dreams that seem impossible can be realized with determination and persistence, no matter what the odds are.

Even the most distant dream can be realized with persistence and determination.

Slide 11:

There will be people who will dampen your spirits and criticize your new goals and aspirations. Genuinely forgive them. Do this for your own sake, your own peace of mind.

Carrying around grudges, emotions of disapproval, hatred, or disappointment is toxic to your spirit of perseverance. You do not hurt others when you hold hatred toward them; you hurt yourself. You cannot experience anger and joy at the same time, so leave plenty of room for the joy.

Slide 12:

Most importantly, seek help from Allah. It is only with His help that we can do good things and it is with His help that we will be able to do them with continuity. Believe me, faltering, giving up and falling back in your comfort zone is so easy, and that is why *du’a* to Allah swt is a vital tool if we want to persevere.

Slide 13:

Perseverance and failure cannot coexist. Failure happens when you quit.

From learning to walk, to riding a bicycle, our childhood teaches us that failure only occurs when we stop trying. It is a lesson many of us need to revisit for the rest of our lives.

We are likely to stumble at first. It is part of the learning process. Ultimately, the people who persevere through the stumbling process are the ones who learn enough to become successful.

Slides 14-15:

To summarize the important steps you needed to persevere:

• Sharpen your Focus

• Build Competence

• Ignite Passion

• Get Support

• Do not Quit

Ending today’s class by telling you a little story of the frog who persevered!

Two young frogs fell into a bucket of milk. Both tried to jump to freedom, but the sides of the bucket were steep, and no foundation was to be had on the surface of the liquid. Seeing little chance of escape, the first frog soon despaired and stopped jumping. After a short while he sunk to the bottom of the bucket and drowned.

The second frog also saw no likelihood of success, but he never stopped trying. Even though each jump seemed to reach the same inadequate height, he kept on struggling. Eventually, his persistent efforts churned some milk into butter. From the now hardened surface of the milk, he managed to leap out of the bucket.

The moral of this inspiring story: “Those who don't give up and persevere may be in for a pleasant surprise!”

(Du’a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati ‘amma yasifun wa salamun ‘alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil.*

*‘alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*