



**PERSEVERANCE**

# BUILDING CHARACTER

APRIL

Some of the greatest success stories of today are of people who have persevered in spite of great obstacles. Walt Disney was fired from his job as a newspaper editor because he lacked creative ideas. He later filed bankruptcy several times and was told repeatedly to forget the "mouse idea" because there was no future in it. Three-time Olympic gold medal winner Wilma Rudolph was crippled as a young child after contracting polio. She was told she would never walk again. Instead of giving up, she *ran* and became known as the "Fastest Woman in the World." Success is about not giving up when the going gets tough. It's persevering through life's trials and tribulations until you reach your goal. This month as we focus on the trait perseverance, consider sharing some of your own personal success stories with your children. Inspire them to keep reaching for the stars and to never give up.

## PERSEVERANCE AT HOME

1. In the spirit of baseball legend Babe Ruth's perseverance (hitting 714 home runs in spite of 1330 strike outs), use a baseball and write the initials of family members on it when they show perseverance.
2. Bounce a ball back and forth with your child to illustrate the importance of "bouncing back" after she encounters a setback or failure in life. Encourage your child to learn from her mistakes and grow stronger from them. "It's not whether or not you get knocked down. It's whether you get back up again." —Ralph Waldo Emerson
3. Watch the movie "The Journey of Natty Gann" (Walt Disney, 1985) with your family. It is a story told during the Great Depression of the 1930s about a young girl's journey to join her father, who is logging in the Pacific Northwest. It is a story of perseverance, courage, and hope. "Homeward Bound" is another entertaining family movie about perseverance.

*"The greatest oak tree was once a little nut who held its ground."*

Author Unknown

## The Miracle Bridge

The Brooklyn Bridge that spans the river between Manhattan and Brooklyn is simply an engineering miracle. In 1869, a creative engineer, John Roebling, was inspired by an idea for this spectacular bridge project. However, bridge-building experts told him it just was not possible. Roebling convinced his son, Washington, an engineer, how it could be accomplished, and how to overcome the obstacles. Somehow they convinced bankers to finance the project and with great excitement hired their crew to begin to build their dream bridge.

The project was only a few months under way when a tragic on-site accident killed John Roebling. Washington continued with the project until he developed a terrible illness from continuously working underwater. He was bedridden and unable to walk or talk. Everyone thought that the project would be scrapped since the Roeblings were the only ones who understood how the bridge could be built.

Though Washington Roebling was not able to speak, his mind was as sharp as ever. One day, as he lay in his hospital bed, an idea flashed in his mind as how to develop a communication code. All he could move was one finger, so he touched his wife's arm with that finger. He tapped out the code to communicate to her what she was to tell the engineers who continued building the bridge. For 13 years Washington communicated his instructions through his wife until the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge was finally completed in 1883.

Adapted from *A Fresh Packet of Sower's Seeds*  
by Brian Cavanaugh

BUILDING CHARACTER...THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

