

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Dr. Bektash Berdiev

How to Tackle Your Challenges

Students will...

- Define **goals** and **obstacles**.
- Identify **actions** taken by one person to help another reach a goal.
- Examine how actions display **empathy** and **integrity**.

Goal = What you want

Obstacle = What blocks you from your goal

Character Strength = A trait you have and can develop that helps you put your values into action

Empathy = Understanding and caring about the perspectives of others

Integrity = Acting honestly, according to what you think is important

We naturally try to overcome **obstacles** that get in the way of our **goals**.

Using **empathy**, we can learn about and root for other people's goals.

Using **integrity**, we can support one another in overcoming obstacles and reaching goals.



Watch: 1930s TV footage of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan

(available at the following links)

On our website:

<https://libertymuseum.org/liberty-institute/tours/overview/>

YouTube: <http://youtu.be/GzlriQv16gg>

1. What is going on in this video?

TeacherTube:

2. What examples did you see of someone using **empathy** and **integrity**?

<http://www.teachertube.com/video/34096>

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Helen Keller, as a child, wanted to communicate. However, being blind and deaf made it hard for her to learn language. She overcame this obstacle by learning a special form of sign language from her teacher, Anne Sullivan.

Every character in a story has a **goal** (something they want) and an **obstacle** (something that blocks them from having it).

In this mini-story about Helen Keller...

What is Helen's **goal**?

What is Helen's **obstacle**?

Person	Goal	Obstacle	Action
Helen Keller	to communicate	being blind and deaf made it hard for her to learn language	She learned a special form of sign language from her teacher, Anne Sullivan.



Anne Sullivan wanted her student, Helen Keller, to be able to communicate. However, being blind and deaf made it hard for Helen to learn language. Anne overcame this obstacle by teaching Helen a special form of sign language.

Is Helen Keller still the main character in our story?

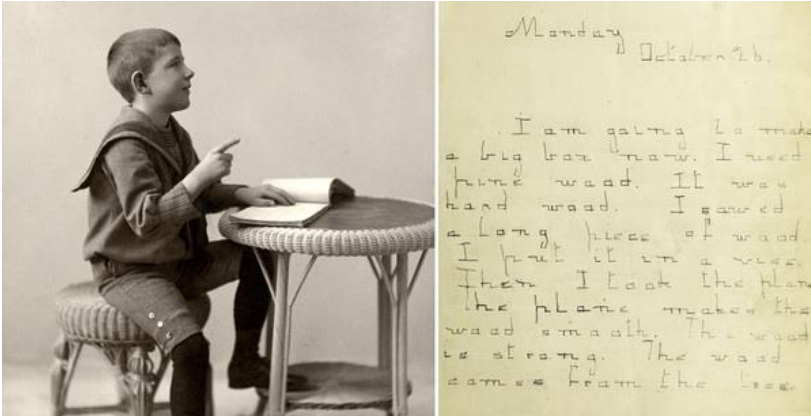
Who is the main character?

What is Anne's **goal**?

What is Anne's **obstacle**?

Person	Goal	Obstacle	Action
Anne Sullivan	for her student, Helen, to be able to communicate	Being blind and deaf made it hard for Helen to learn language.	She taught Helen a special form of sign language.

Mini-Story #3: Tommy Stringer



Tommy Stringer, a young boy who was blind and deaf, wanted to go to school. However, no one could afford his tuition at the School for the Blind. Helen Keller learned about his story and was moved. She remembered wanting to learn too. She asked people to donate money and collected enough to send Tommy to school.

Who is our main character now?

What is Tommy's **goal**?

What is Tommy's **obstacle**?

What **action** is taken to overcome the obstacle?

Person	Goal	Obstacle	Action
Tommy Stringer	to go to school	No one could afford to pay his tuition.	Helen Keller asked people to donate money.

Person	Goal	Obstacle	Action
Tommy Stringer, a young boy who was also deaf and blind	to go to school	No one could afford to pay his tuition.	Helen Keller asked people to donate money.

In this story, Tommy wants to go to school. **But what does Helen want?**

She must want Tommy to go to school, too, or she wouldn't take action to make it happen. **But why does she want that?**

Pair-Share

Talk with a partner. Why would Helen care whether Tommy goes to school?

(Re-read the story on the previous slide if needed.)



Did You Know?

Empathy is a character strength that anyone can practice.

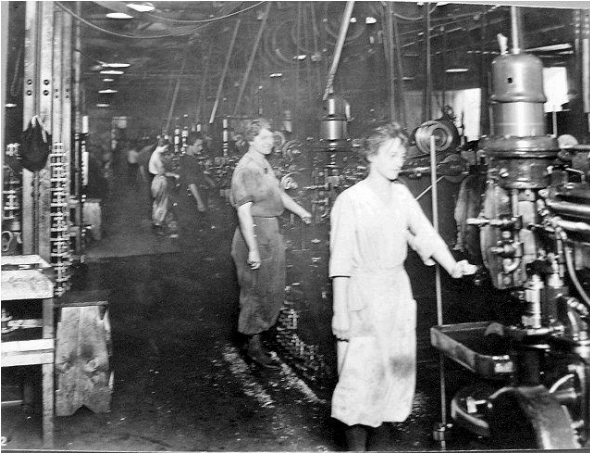
When you look at a situation from someone else's point of view and care about their feelings and their **goals**, you are using empathy.

Using **empathy**, Helen looked at the situation from Tommy's point of view, thought about how he must feel, and wanted him to reach his **goal** of going to school.



Think About It

Think of a time you were rooting for someone else to reach their goal (for example, wanting your friend to win a talent show). Why did it matter to you?



People working in factories in the early 1900s wanted to be safe and healthy, just like you do.

However, their working conditions were dangerous.

Sometimes, they would get injured and sick. Helen Keller, now an adult,

learned about their obstacles and wanted to help them be safe. She made speeches to convince people the laws should be changed to protect

Who are the main characters in this story?

What is the factory workers' goal?

What is their **obstacle**?

What **action** is taken to try to overcome the obstacle?

People	Goal	Obstacle	Action
People who worked in factories in the early 1900s	to be safe and healthy	They had dangerous working conditions.	Helen Keller (as an adult) made speeches to convince people the laws should protect workers.

Think About It

Helen worked alongside factory workers to help overcome their obstacles and reach their goals. **Why do you think she did that?**



If you said Helen experienced **empathy** for the factory workers, you're right. She looked at the situation from their point of view, thought about how they must feel, and wanted them to reach their goals.

But wanting something doesn't make it happen.... People use another **character strength** when they take action to help someone.

Did you know?

Integrity is another character strength that anyone can practice.

When you act according to what you think is important, you are using integrity.

- Helen thought it was important for Tommy to go to school... so she **acted (she raised money for him)**
- Helen thought it was important for factory workers to be safe... so she **acted (she made speeches).**



“I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.” ~Helen Keller



Pair-Share

1. In your own words, what does this quote mean?
2. What actions did Helen Keller take that match her statement?

When you make your actions match your words, you are using **integrity**.

Review

Integrity is a **character strength** that anyone can practice. When you **act** according to what you think is important, you are using integrity.

Choosing the right **action** is what gets you to the **goal**.

➤ Helen thought it was important for Tommy to go to school... so she **acted** (she raised money for him

➤ Helen thought it was important for factory workers to be safe... so she **acted** (she made speeches).



Check for Understanding

See what you know! Fill in the blanks on your *Taking Action to Overcome Obstacles* worksheet.

Wrap-Up

When you are finished, on a separate small piece of paper, answer the following question:

What is one thing you learned from this lesson today?

Overcoming Obstacles

- ▶ Everyone will occasionally struggle – what is important is **how you react** to the struggle. Will you give up? Or will you keep going no matter what? The choice is yours!
- ▶ “You have extraordinary power within you to overcome life's difficult challenges.”

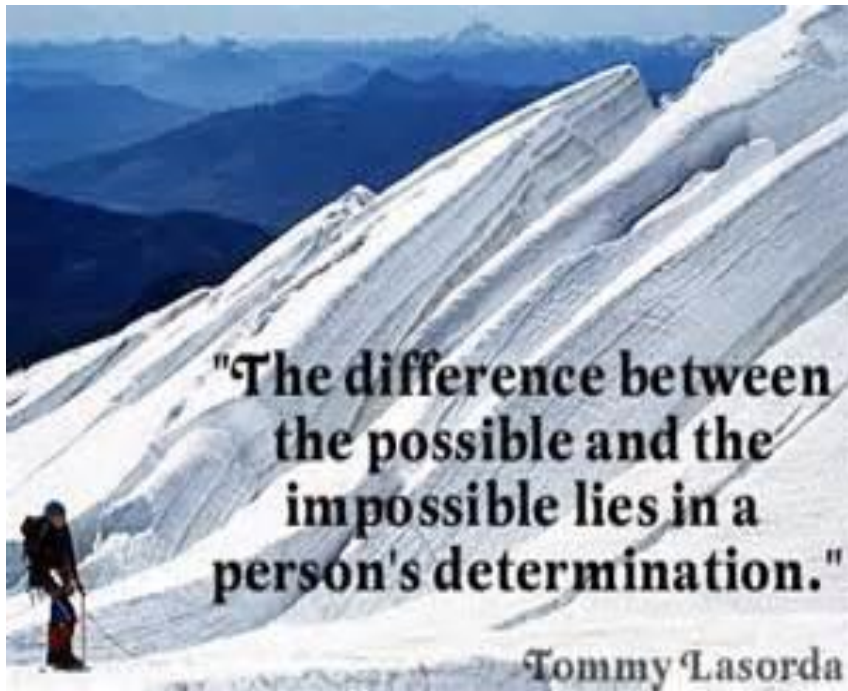
— [Lailah Gifty Akita](#)



Think * Pair * Share

- ▶ Think of a time when you faced an obstacle.
- ▶ How did you overcome it?
- ▶ Share with a partner.
- ▶ Partner A will share with the class what Partner B said.

Why do some people try harder than others?



- ▶ Why do some people accomplish more than others of equal (or greater) talent?
- ▶ “Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake...”
 - ▶ William James (1907)

Another word for “determination”:

GRIT

- ▶ “Grit” is perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Grit means working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining both effort and interest over years and years – despite failure, adversity, and even just stalls in progress.

Another word for “determination”:

GRIT

- ▶ The gritty individual approaches achievement as a marathon; his advantage is stamina.
 - ▶ Angela L. Duckworth, University of Pennsylvania

How do I get to be good at something?

- ▶ *You're just born that way – you are naturally (athletic, good at math, good at singing, good at English...)*



- ▶ Recent research shows that it's not in your genes!
- ▶ Talent is about practice.
- ▶ Talent takes effort.
- ▶ Talent requires a good coach.
- ▶ Talent is about hard work.

Think * Pair * Share

- ▶ Think of a person you know (or know of) who practiced and practiced a skill until he or she became proficient.
- ▶ Who is the person? What did he or she do?
- ▶ Share with your elbow partner.
- ▶ Partner B will share one thing that Partner A said.

Research Findings

- ▶ Grittier adults complete more years of education.



Research Findings

- ▶ Grittier college undergraduates have higher GPAs than their peers, even if their SAT scores are lower.



Think and Respond

- ▶ Why do you think that “grittier” students have higher GPAs than students with less “grit?”
- ▶ Think silently for a moment, and your teacher will call on a few students to share your responses.

Be an Elite Performer!



- ▶ Achievement is the product of talent AND effort.
- ▶ Effort is not just intensity (how hard you work) but also consistency (do you keep going?) and duration (how long do you work?)

What if I Fail?

- ▶ Throughout life, you will have disappointment, failure, misfortune, and yes, even occasional boredom.
- ▶ **DON'T GIVE UP!**

**Failure Is The Key To
Success!**



Show Your Grit!



- ▶ Excellence at anything requires years and years of time on task – staying on task and getting the job done no matter what – there is no substitute for hard work!

Reference and sources

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