

# Topic: Virtue

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Many people may see me walking down the streets of my torn down neighborhood, and perhaps view me as another Dominican girl from the *hood*. I am precisely that, a twenty-three year old girl who was raised, and still lives in a dangerous little neighborhood in the Bronx. However, I am more than that as-well. I am a person who wants, and will help change many lives; I will be able to do this through my teaching career. I am change, I am difference.

There are numerous ways that I plan on achieving my goal of becoming an excellent teacher, and being a virtuous person is number one on that list. The virtue, which has helped me come so far in both my academic and social life, is *commitment*. According to the “World Language Process” website, commitment is defined as, “caring deeply about a person, a goal or a belief. Having the willingness to give our all and keep our promises” (1). I highly agree with this definition, and I also believe it is such an important virtue for everyone to have. Being committed has helped me achieve many important goals in my life, and I know it will help me achieve many more. I am a very dedicated full-time college student. My education is extremely important to me, hence my good grades. I work extraordinarily hard to obtain the grades that I have, which reflects beautifully in my ever-evolving grade point average (3.7). It has been both an arduous and satisfying task to increase my grade point average from where it was in the genesis of my college career. I did not do so well when I first began attending college, therefore my grade point average suffered tremendously. However, I maintained a rigorous studying regime, I stood by my goals, and I kept my promises; eventually I was able to progress academically. The feeling of receiving an A in all of my classes was very overwhelming and surreal. I studied extremely hard for all of my exams and I completed my assignments with 100% dedication. It was pleasing to see my hard work, my sweat and especially my tears pay off.

Another amazing reward of being committed academically is receiving the Dean's List and the Honor Roll certificates. These merits are reminders to students that their hard work is not going unnoticed. The two most important rewards of being committed to my academics is making my mother proud of me, and attaining all of the invaluable knowledge that college students should be obtaining while attending school.

In his article “Ten Essential Virtues” Thomas Lickona mentions how indispensable *hard work* (or commitment) truly is (1). Lickona says, “hard work includes initiative, diligence, goal-setting, and resourcefulness” (1). These are all attributes that have helped me excel in my social life as well. Due to being committed I have gained many exceptional jobs and I have made connections with people of very high prestige. For example, I work as a child-care provider and as a tutor. Some of the children I provide care for have special needs. Many of the parents know how challenging tutoring children with special needs are, and they highly appreciate my commitment to help their child blossom. One of the parents of these children was able to get me hired in Columbia University as a Research Assistant. Although the eminent program at Columbia is very competitive, the parent assured me he would do his best to get me working there for six months. Fortunately, they kept me for a year. The parent later told me that he recommended me to work at Columbia University due to my amazing work ethic and dedication. I felt really delighted, so delighted that my eyes were full of joyful tears. Despite having amazing connections and amazing job opportunities, being committed to my job as a child-care provider has rewarded me with the love and growth of the children. Throughout the few years I have been tutoring these children, I have observed such a tremendous growth in their personality and academics. When I see that they are able to solve what may be a difficult mathematics problem or define a complex word, it brings much bliss to my heart and soul. For example, one

of the little girls that I tutor was very pessimistic on her vocabulary comprehension skills. She claimed that she would **never** be able to spell the word “optimistic” on her own. After I provided her with optimistic advice she felt more confident. We spent a few days going over the word, and formulating sentences with it as well. After a week, I asked her, “How do you spell the word Optimistic?” Her face lit up and so did my heart. She hastily, and correctly spelled the word. After she spelled the word, she provided me with the definition, *and* an example of what being optimistic truly is. When moments like these occur all of my efforts are paid off.

Being that I was born and raised in the poorest congressional district of the United States, it has been very vital to my success to distance myself from any distractions, and to stay committed to my ultimate goal. If I were not as committed academically, I would still be failing my college courses, wasting time, and money. It is highly possible that I would have been dismissed from my College as well, due to my declining grades. Moreover, without a college education, I would’ve had an entirely different perspective of life; a negative one. I remember that throughout those days where I was performing poorly academically, I would often times feel very depressed and somber. These adversities would have awaited me if I did not commit to my education and to my future.

Currently, I pay out of my pocket for my college tuition; I was never able to understand exactly why. I have a younger brother who attends college as well, and I live in an apartment that is consistently struggling to meet with the household necessities. Therefore, the fact I do not obtain any financial support is very unfortunate and displeasing to me. My mother works full time and my father has two jobs; unfortunately, my family still struggles constantly nonetheless. This makes me sad and perplexed all at once, but most importantly it motivates me immensely. Sadly, my financial needs have been a grand obstacle for me to stay committed to my goal. I

work approximately 20 hours a week, and I do not get paid very much, but I constantly save money. The money I save goes towards my tuition bill, and towards my teaching certifications as well. It is very difficult to work part-time and attend school full-time, whilst trying to balance a social life, too, but it is highly possible!

There are many mediums that I use in order to overcome the obstacles of fatigue and pessimism. Every semester I try my absolute best to maintain myself as organized as I possible can. One way to do this is by having a planner, and staying on track with the syllabus from the designated classes that I take. I also stay organized in regards to my sleeping pattern. I try to allot my time very precisely, and effectively in order to have enough energy to perform my given tasks. Another medium that I use in order to stay sane while working part-time, and attending school full-time is reading uplifting literature. One example of a book that has kept me motivated is, "I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban" by, Malala Yousafzai. This narrative is truly inspirational and enriching. The fact that such horrid things occur to young women who simply want to obtain education is very devastating. This also allows me to appreciate my education furthermore, considering I am not subjected to such atrocious events in trying to obtain it. A very beautiful quote by Malala Yousafzai also keeps me inspired when I am unmotivated, she says: "Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons" (Yousafzai 25).

Overall, being committed is both difficult and rewarding. I am extremely happy to have hard working parents who have instilled the virtue of commitment in me. I hope to stay committed to everything that I do, but my greatest hope is to inspire my future students to stay committed to their goals as well.

Work Cited

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