

## The Power of Consistency

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We are often discouraged when things do not go our way. I am currently 23 years old, and I still get a sense of insecurity when I fail, or I do not meet the expectations I have for myself. I too often confuse consistency with competency, because one will show my ability to perform the other. As often as I am told that failure is inevitable, I find myself trying to be perfect in everything I do. I believe I do not stand alone in this.

We know logically, it takes practice and consistency to get better at practical habits, yet I want to get it right the first time. As mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends, we can easily extend grace to others, but very quick to be hypercritical of ourselves. It is a challenge for me to get in the mindset that everything takes time, consistency, and practice because I am someone who thrives off productivity and efficiency. I also struggle to determine appropriate categories that would define efficiency because when we start something new, efficiency might not give us our best work. I was not only humbled by the difficulties that came with this global pandemic, but rather by a six-year-old boy who challenged me in ways I constantly felt

like I was failing.

With the coronavirus pandemic that began early last year, I found myself not working at all because the coffee shop I worked at significantly lowered our hours. I was offered a position as a full-time nanny with a family in a nearby city. I have worked with many children and being a caretaker for children has been something I was extremely familiar with but most importantly good at. Without hesitation, I accepted the position because in the midst of so much uncertainty, I needed a job and after all, I had a way with children in which every child I came in contact knew they were secured and loved. As I accepted the offer, his mother and previous babysitter cautioned me and told me that he was short tempered and had some difficulties expressing his emotions.

This six-year-old gave me so much joy and fun in a span of six months as well as many lessons and tears. Singing, screaming, and running became the mundane in the midst of my own uncertainties and loneliness that followed with quarantine. As a sister, I knew how to play and as a daughter, I learned how to love because of the unconditional love my mother gave me. I also know that the habits I have and the standards I hold for myself are a product of the lifestyle my mother modeled for me so well. I was not sure why my biggest challenge would be patience -- A virtue my mother so desperately needed me to understand when I was his age. Being the youngest of five taught me much, never how to be patient. Patience is a quality in a mother that often gets overlooked. I found myself disappointed when I was

unable to make him listen to me or listen to his teacher. It was hard to see his disappointment when he was not chosen or to see his anger when things did not go the way he expected. I wanted his behavior to change and understand that his emotions were valid and that there were alternative ways to show those emotions without hurting people's feelings, yelling, or hitting. I worked with him six days out of the week and I would always feel defeated at the end of the day. The optimism that I had driving to his home would slowly dwindle as it felt like I was not the best fit for what he needed. I learned quickly that I was projecting my insecurity to do things well onto him. The disappointment did not come from him not listening, but rather my lack of ability to make him listen. As consistent as I was and observed his needs to love him well, it seemed to have no effect. I was tired of trying new methods, creating different outlets for his emotions, but I continued to love him and stay consistent in his life in the midst of all the inconsistencies in his life. Patience would be the virtue that would abound in loving him even in those moments it seemed like I was not making progress and consistency would be the habit he would remember as love.

After working with him for almost six months, we began to see progress. He began to verbally tell me his emotions and help his younger brother. He also began to choose to be nice to a classmate that was mean and disrespectful. He began to want to love and, in a sense, understand others. This is what showed the missing factor in the equation I mentioned earlier about competency and consistency. Consistency and patience surpass the qualifications we think make us competent.

We are mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends with different stories and backgrounds, but all with one common goal to use our gifts to change individual hearts and live sacrificially for others. Interning with the Women's Federation for World Peace USA reminds me of the word consistency. The impact women have made with the virtues our creator has uniquely given us reminds me of the way we can simply impact those around us with consistency and patience to wait for the seeds we plant to grow.

Let's continue to show up for others even when it seems like nothing is changing.