How to Build Character in your Children

Day 8:

**Tenacity**  
By Lisa Lakey

Thomas Edison once said, “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

Edison knew a thing or two about discouragement. Although the genius inventor had more than 1,000 successful U.S. patents, he also had between 500-600 patent attempts that could be called failures. Yet, he also said, “I haven’t failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

I want my kids to develop that kind of tenacity—the determination and perseverance to overcome life’s obstacles. Thankfully, this is something we can start to teach our children from an early age. Life will give them plenty of opportunities to give up—from learning to walk to riding a bike. But with a little guidance and encouragement from their loving parents, our kids can develop the tenacity to keep going, even when the going gets tough.

Here are a few tips to develop tenacity in your kids:

*Don’t take over when things get hard.* Sometimes it’s easier, for our kids and for us, to take over tasks they struggle with. For me, this has been especially true when it comes to proper cleaning habits. But they will only learn and get better through practice. Give them room to make their own mistakes, especially while they are still under your roof.

*Remember the power of words*. My kids aren’t allowed to say “I can’t” when attempting something new. “I’ll try again” helps to keep the discouragement at bay. It’s a true statement that kids who think they can’t, won’t. In the same way, kids who feel their *parents* don’t think they can, will rarely try.

*Offer plenty of encouragement.* Praise their efforts when they practice, try again, or show even the slightest improvement. Whether my daughter hits an amazing backhand on the tennis court, or my son kicks the soccer ball for the first (and only) time during the season, I am their biggest (and loudest) fan. Encourage your kids through both your words and unwavering support.

**Scripture:**

1 Timothy 4:16 Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.