

CHASING INFLUENCE

PURPOSE: SISYPHUS' UPHILL BATTLE

"If You Aren't In Over Your Head, How Do You Know How Tall You Are?" -T.S. Eliot

In Greek mythology, the story of Sisyphus is about a man who angered the gods due to his deceitfulness and pride. As punishment, Sisyphus was sentenced by the gods to roll an immense boulder up a steep hill each day, only to have it roll back down to the bottom every time he neared the top. The gods had sentenced him to this eternal task as punishment. Sisyphus knew that his task was futile and that no matter how hard he worked, he would never be able to complete it. But still, he persevered, pushing the boulder up the hill day after day, never giving up. At first, Sisyphus was angry and resentful and cursed the gods for their cruelty. However, as time went on, he began to see his task as a challenge, and he found purpose and meaning in the struggle. He began to focus on the process of rolling the boulder up the hill rather than on the end result. The myth provides an important lesson about how setbacks and obstacles are an inevitable part of life. Sisyphus accepted the reality that his hard work could be undone instantly, yet he kept pushing forward. He never gave up or lost hope. Every day, he would start over again, determined to try harder and do better the next time. We can all learn from this kind of determination and resilience. Whether we face setbacks in our personal lives, school, or the field, we must keep pushing forward and never give up on our goals. Like Sisyphus, we must learn to find purpose and meaning in the struggle and to focus on the process rather than the outcome. Sisyphus, unfortunately, had to perform his task alone. Thankfully, we have the support of our teammates and community. When we all work together, we can achieve much more than we ever could on our own. The journey may be difficult, but with determination and the support of those around us, even if we don't reach the top of the hill, the effort we expend trying to do so can become a goal itself! "Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction." - John F. Kennedy

Connecting this quote to the story

This quote reminds us that purpose and direction are essential components of success, individually and as part of a team. Sisyphus's story demonstrates that even in the face of a

seemingly impossible task, we can find purpose and meaning in the struggle and use that to fuel our efforts and achieve our goals.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you think this story relates to sports?

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2. Even though, as mythology has it, Sisyphus was being punished for misdeeds (and we are not), in what ways are we like Sisyphus, and what can we learn from his daily efforts?

3. Can you think of a time when you faced a setback or obstacle? How did you deal with it, and what did you learn from the experience?

4. What is your purpose - and what kind of work are you putting in to achieve it?

