

CHASING INFLUENCE

COMMITMENT: LIFE'S MARATHON

"There are a hundred valid reasons why something can't be done, but only one reason, Commitment, why it can." -Jonathan Lockwood Huie

The concept of commitment is on display in various facets of life, from our families, our sports teams, our education, and our professional pursuits. However, some individuals take the concept of commitment to an entirely different level. In their search for enlightenment the marathon monks of Mount Hiei in Japan commit to either run or walk the equivalent of hundreds of marathons over a seven-year span. During this time the monks vow to not have any contact with the outside world, a symbol of their self-discipline and commitment to their goal. Since 1885, only 46 monks have completed this arduous challenge. The schedule is grueling and tests the outer limits of the monks' endurance. During each of the first three years, each monk must run 18 miles per day for 100 straight days. In year four, the monks must run the same distance but for 200 days, and in year five the monk must run the same distance each day even as they fast for seven and a half days and go without sleep for one full week. Year six requires the monk to run an incredible 37 miles per day for 100 days straight, while in year seven the monk must run the equivalent of two full marathons per day for 100 straight days, with only two hours of sleep each night. During the final 100 days of their quest the monk again runs eighteen miles each day. A monk who completes the quest has traveled a distance near that of circling the globe. The commitment required for this challenge is immense, and the monks' discipline is beyond imagination. During the first 100 days of the challenge, the monk may quit. However, after that, quitting is not an option. The monk carries a rope and a dagger as part of an ancient tradition, and the trail is lined with graves of monks who did not complete the challenge and took their own life. While most of us may never undertake such an extreme challenge, the marathon monks can teach us a valuable lesson about commitment, determination, and goal-setting. Setting challenging goals and committing to them can help us achieve our own personal milestones. The marathon monks' journeys are a testament to the power of perseverance, determination, and the human spirit.

Connecting this quote to the story

You cannot give up or quit but must rise every time after setbacks. The journey toward greatness is not an easy one. It is okay to stumble or fall along the way, but what's important is to keep getting back up and moving forward. The marathon monks display mental determination beyond

comprehension. In what ways can mental determination benefit each of us? Sometimes, maintaining a positive attitude can prove challenging. The marathon monks had an arduous task in front of them each day, yet they consistently maintained a positive attitude. What kind of a difference can a positive attitude make - why is a positive mental attitude so important? This story is about commitment and resilience. What happens when an individual is absent of commitment?

Reflection Questions

1. How do you define commitment in sports?

Click or tap here to enter your answer.

2. Give an example of a time when resilience paid off in the long run.

3. Describe a setback you have experienced in sports. How did you respond, and what could you do differently next time?

4. What is one specific commitment you can make this week to improve as an athlete? Explain how you will follow through when it becomes difficult.