

## All Sorts of Perseverance

*“And let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.”* From Hebrews 12:1,2

What do we think of when we think of perseverance? Sticking to a diet? Going to the gym three times a week? It can be much more painful. The following letter is from a lady in response to *Sun Magazine* asking its readers **to share an instance of perseverance in their lives.**

“The first time I visited my brother at Fairton prison, it was snowing, and I got off the New Jersey Turnpike too soon and added an hour to the normally four-hour trip. The next time, I forgot to bring quarters for the vending machines, and I couldn’t even offer him a soda or a plastic-wrapped sandwich. Three months later it was summer and ninety-eight degrees. I arrived in shorts and flip-flops, and the guards wouldn’t allow me past the entry because I wasn’t wearing ‘proper attire’.

“Eventually I got the routine down: Go only on Tuesdays, because it’s less crowded and quieter. Organize everything the night before – map, gas, clothes, flashlight, lunch, water, and chocolate bars for the late-afternoon drive home. Try to fall asleep early. (Wine helps.) Ignore the bad dreams. Leave by 5 AM and aim to be at Linda’s Diner on Black Horse Pike by 7:15. Order the farmer’s breakfast special to stave off hunger during the dismal five-and-a-half-hour visit. Remember my brother’s Social Security number to make the sign-in process faster. And make sure there are tissues in the car, because even after two decades of seeing my brother behind bars, I know I’ll need them once I leave.” A.C. ,Tuckahoe, NY

**Another lady gave an example of perseverance involving her father.** He lost both feet in France, March 1945, about five miles from the German border. German shrapnel destroyed his left ankle in the early evening, the other leg got hit just before dawn. He didn’t expect to live, but he did. He asked the doctors to save his knees so he’d have an easier time walking on prosthetics.

He returned to the U.S, met and married the letter writer’s mother, earned an engineering degree, and had seven kids. The kids remember that every weekday morning he got out of bed, pulled heavy woolen socks over the stumps that ended halfway down his legs and put on his prosthetics, with socks and shoes attached. He was determined to never miss a day of work.

Every now and then when he was sitting with his family, he went to what they called the “Dad Zone”, now called PTSD. But he never wallowed in self-pity, never gave up. In fact, shortly before his death he had undergone a painful surgery to remove infected bone in his legs. Fifty-five years after losing his feet, he then went to therapy in hopes of being fitted with new prosthetics. He died before receiving them. For her dad perseverance was one step after another.

This lesson was not lost on the lady who wrote the letter. She was working in the North Tower on 9/11/2001. Her dad had died two years earlier, but his example was on her mind. She knew there was a real possibility that she would die, but she decided that she’d die running. Many of her coworkers didn’t make it. She feels fortunate, of course. She just wishes her dad was around to help her handle her PTSD. – L.S., Shrewsbury Township, NJ