

# An importance of stubbornness according to superman and me

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



## **Persistence: The Key to Success**

Reading, a skill possessed by a majority of people in modern times, and also a skill taken for granted by modern society. Most people learn to read in their early childhood, mentored by their parents and teachers. However, not all children enjoy the luxury of a caring environment. Sherman Alexie is among those who had to persevere through adversity and endeavor on his own to obtain the ability to read. His own encounters with the feat of learning to read have inspired him to make every effort to, through his writing, assist any child going through the same struggle. In the essay “ The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me”, by Sherman Alexie, Alexie’s purpose is to demonstrate to the reader that persistence is the key to achieving goals in life. Alexie shows this purpose of persistence leading to success through his use of repetition and symbolism.

Alexie’s use of repetition serves to demonstrate that persistence is vital to achieving goals. In his essay, Alexie shares that, in his quest to save his life, he, “ read books late into the night... read books at recess... read books in the car... read the books my father brought home...” (13). This quote shows just four of the fourteen times Alexie repeats the word “ read” in the paragraph on pages thirteen and fourteen. The reiteration serves to make the reader realize the extent to which Alexie practiced his reading in his youth. He constantly honed his reading skills, all in the hopes of achieving his goal of “ saving his life”. For Alexie, “ saving his life” meant becoming educated and breaking free of the constraints set upon him by his traditional reservation. His excessive recurrence of the word “ read” showed his

persistence in chasing his goal of education, and causes the reader to understand how his persistence is the virtue that led to his success.

Also, Alexie's use of symbolism serves to establish that persistence is crucial in order to achieve goals. In the essay, Alexie states that when first learning to read, he pretended to read the words, "I am breaking down the door"(13). In this quote, the door Alexie is breaking down represents the barrier created by the adversity he receives from his background as an Indian on a reservation. This personal symbol puts into perspective for the reader the inhospitable environment in which Alexie grew up in. For many readers, childhood education was encouraged by their parents and community. Most have never been in a situation where their learning was discouraged by their environment, and thus cannot relate to Alexie's description of his struggle, because their education never required such exertion. However, Alexie's comparison of his struggle to a locked door instills into the reader the contrast between their upbringing and Alexie's by making his struggle much more relatable. Not many people can say they have grown up on a Native American reservation and have struggled to learn how to read despite adversity from their surroundings. But, the choice of a locked door, a very familiar object for all, yet also a frustrating one, helps the reader perceive the feeling of vexation that Alexie experienced. A door is the threshold to a new world, a gateway to a new life. Yet, a door can be opened and closed, and so someone has closed and locked the door on Alexie. The door can still be opened, but only with a herculean effort. Since Alexie uses the door as a symbol for his struggles to learn, the reader then associates

the feeling of frustration when faced with a locked door to the challenge of learning how to read. Furthermore, the fact that Alexie has “ broken down the door” and entered into this new world of enlightenment through reading gives the readers perception of the rewards Alexie has reaped through his achievement, which serves as an example that establishes the success of Alexie’s persistence. Having his audience understand Alexie’s mental and emotional struggle causes them to comprehend how ambitious his goal of education was, how the endeavor was akin to such a feat as demolishing a locked door. This understanding of the difficulty of Alexie’s goal, alongside the affirmation of the benefits secured through the achievement of one’s goals, serves to validate in the reader’s mind that persistence, the key virtue that Alexie highlights in his road to success, is indeed vital to the attainment of goals.

Alexie’s purpose is demonstrated mainly through his use of repetition and symbolism. These devices accentuate Alexie’s intention for his audience by fashioning relatable experiences. By utilizing this fabricated empiricism, the reader is able to connect personally to Alexie’s trials, and understand how his persistence was crucial to his success. Now, equipped with the knowledge of Alexie’s surmounting of his challenges, the virtue of persistence is substantiated in the audience’s mind, and one more reader has been “ saved” by Alexie.