

Determined

A determined person is one who follows through to the end on his/her obligations, or on promises he has made to himself. Are you this kind of person? Do you consider that being determined is a virtue? Does it sometimes preclude flexibility, and make a person too rigid?

Examples

1

I have long been determined to write at least three hundred words of prose a day. I don't remember the origin of this commitment to myself, but I have remained (with rare exceptions) faithful to it for decades. The demand involved is not that arduous, and the quality control, day by day, often fairly slack, but to stick with that determination for so long has meant an abiding commitment to the act of writing. Has it been a way of getting stronger in the skill of writing, or simply a way of sticking to writing? This determination has paid off by encouraging the habit of writing carefully. That is indirectly a contribution to writing well, or as well as one can. One should not, however, confuse the results of determination with the virtue of sticking with it.

2

I walk three miles each morning on the track. I am doggedly faithful to this routine, though at times I would gladly stay in bed. It is not even that I will feel good about myself when I have completed my assignment. It is that I am determined to remain determined to meet my challenge. Sometimes I cheat, by stopping to talk, but when that happens I usually punish myself by adding a little to the total distance I require of myself. Am I trying to punish myself, in the whole exercise? Well, yes, to some extent. I am punishing myself for being determined to punish myself.