

Adversity: “A state of hardship, affliction or misfortune.”

Success: “The degree to which one moves forward despite all adversity.”

Have you ever watched a cycling race, like the Tour de France? Man, can those guys fly when they’re going down a hill or riding a tail wind! – 40, 50, or even 60 miles an hour! But the real test of a good cyclist is how well they ride going uphill, or against a strong head wind. In fact, that’s how they train. They look for hills to climb, and head winds to fight... because that’s what makes them strong and gives them endurance for the real test on race day. It’s really the same for all of us. Adversity makes us stronger, when we battle through it.

But not everyone chooses to embrace their obstacles or welcome adversity. In fact, many of us whine, complain, and run the other way when things get tough or ugly. It seems like we fall into one of three categories when it comes to handling adversity.

First, there are a lot of “Prisoners” out there. They’re the ones who give up and say, “It’s no use” “It’s impossible” and “I quit” They’re controlled by their circumstances and their anger. Next we have the “Settlers”. They say things like, “This isn’t fair” or, “This is as good as I can do” “This is good enough” They always search for what’s comfortable, not for what’s best. But then there are the “Pioneers” who stand above their circumstances and say things like, “I can find a way” “I choose to fight” and “I believe it’s possible”. They almost say, “I love a challenge...bring on the problems!”

Pioneer thinking is different from Prisoner and Settler thinking, and anyone can do it. The next time you run into any kind of adversity, try these three things: First, look for the lesson – there’s something to learn that will take you over, around, or through your problem. Second, reconsider any assumptions you’ve made about what can and can’t be done. Some walls aren’t walls at all once you take a closer look. Lastly, be willing to change your present strategies to get different results. If you keep doing what you’ve always done, you’ll keep getting what you’ve always got.

The biggest difference is that Pioneer thinking sees adversity as an opportunity, not a threat. So learn to say this out loud today: “Thanks for the problems....I need the practice!”

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Students will learn three possible responses to adversity and apply them to their personal experiences.

INSTRUCTIONS: Distribute the handout to students after viewing the video. Invite students to share their answers to question #1 only.

CLASS DISCUSSION AFTER COMPLETING PAGE TWO:

1. Why do people seldom choose Pioneer Thinking when faced with adversity?
2. What are the benefits of Pioneer Thinking?
3. How do you feel after seeing or hearing about people who overcame great adversity?

1

What's an example that you've seen of someone overcoming great adversity?

2

What adversity are you facing now and what would Pioneer Thinking look and sound like?

Private answer