**enroll and experience**

*Share the following story:*

When she looked ahead, Florence Chadwick saw nothing but a solid wall of fog. Her body was numb. She had been swimming for nearly sixteen hours.

Already she was the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. Now, at age, 34, her goal was to become the first woman to swim from Catalina Island to the California coast.

On the morning of July 4, 1952, the sea was like an ice bath and the fog was so dense she could hardly see her support boats. Sharks cruised toward her lone figure, only to be driven away by rifle shots. Against the frigid grip of the sea, she struggled on—hour after hour—while millions watched on national television.

Alongside Florence in one of the boats, her mother and her trainer offered encouragement. They told her it wasn’t much farther. But all she could see was fog. They urged her not to quit. She never had … until then.

Still thawing her chilled body several hours later, she told a reporter, “Look, I’m not excusing myself, but if I could have seen land I might have made it.” It was not fatigue or even the cold water that defeated her. It was the fog. She was unable to see her goal. Two months later, she tried again. This time, despite the same dense fog, she swam with her faith intact and her goal clearly pictured in her mind. She knew that somewhere behind that fog was land, and this time she made it! Florence Chadwick of San Diego became the first woman to swim the Catalina Channel, eclipsing the men’s record by two hours!

She was so committed to her goal that the fog, temperature, and sharks didn’t matter.

— from *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

**label**

*Put the students in pair shares and ask them to consider the following questions.*

How was Florence Chadwick able to find success?

What was the difference between her first and second attempts?

*Allow time for whole group responses after time in pairs.*
Commitment is about doing what it takes to get the job done. What if when we committed to do something, we always came through? How great would that feel? How respected would we be by others? Staying committed takes determination, persistence, and motivation. Many of us have set a lot of goals in the past and not finished them because of a lack of commitment. HMOY (How many of you) can remember a time that you set a goal and didn’t accomplish it? Perhaps you’ve stopped setting goals because you think you will not achieve them.

*Give a personal example here of a time that you didn’t finish something because you lacked commitment.*

Our Key for this month is **Commitment.** *(Review the body motion.)*

*Give a quick example of a time you accomplished something because of your commitment.*

HMOY can think of a time when you were committed to something and accomplished it, whether it was a small or large goal? Turn to a neighbor and share your experience.

*Take a few shares from the whole group.*

All of us have what it takes to accomplish goals. Every time we commit to something and follow through, we build our capacity to do it again.

demonstrate

Consider the experience you just shared with a neighbor. How did it feel to stay committed? We’ll be writing about our experience and our feelings.

*Have students write, “A time that I committed to something and accomplished it is …” Give students the journal pages as a reflection of the Key.*

Extra prompts and demonstrate activities:

- What are you committed to now?
- List five possible goals for your life right now (consider the following categories: school, home/family, sports/hobbies, friends, and job). Select one goal and outline a “Commitment plan” to accomplish it.
review

*If using KeyCards, present them to students and have them hold the cards Key side up to do a callback and review with you. (If not using KeyCards, do the callback and review with whatever visuals you choose for the introduction of the Key.)*

The Key for this month is …

_Elicit COMMITMENT—loud and clear!_

And what does Commitment mean?

*Read definition with students. Then ask them to turn their KeyCards to the other side.*

What do you say to yourself? Let's all read the words in white.

*Read affirmation with students.*

*Review the body motion.*

celebrate

Now let's high-five all around the classroom to celebrate learning about another one of the 8 Keys of Excellence—COMMITMENT. *(Optional: Have the students repeat the affirmation as they high-five their classmates.)*

*Or create your own class celebration.*
Commitment

It’s always easier to let the wind blow you whichever way it happens to be going. But what distinguishes the drifters from the swimmers is the desire and the commitment to get where you want to go! Your commitment keeps you paddling your arms and kicking your legs—it keeps you moving in your chosen direction, even if it’s through the waves.

Mahatma Gandhi, Thomas Edison, Martin Luther King, Jr., were committed. And we still feel the effects of their commitment, we still hear their names years after their commitment made them famous. What is it about a strong commitment that generates such a lasting impact?

Commitment is not dangling one foot over the edge. There’s no impact in hesitation. You need to jump. Commitment is about saying you will do something, then doing it. Commitment is about tenacity. Commitment is about persevering—and not giving up until you reach your goal.

1. What was a time that I was committed to something?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. What positive results came from my commitment—what did I accomplish?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. What message do I send to people when I break a commitment?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Why is commitment important in my life?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

5. What are some things that I am willing to commit to now? At home? At school?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
Affirm Your COMMITMENT
Make your dreams happen by taking positive action and following your vision without wavering.

Anyone who has ever succeeded at something difficult did so by being completely committed to their goal. Commitment is the breathtaking moment of making a decision, jumping in, and going forward with gusto. It’s the magic moment when all hesitation and ineffectiveness are left behind. The decisive act of making a commitment—when we decide to do “whatever it takes to reach a goal—sets in motion an energy field of action to propel you forward.

Where does your commitment lie! What excites you and spurs you to action? When was a time that you were highly committed—and what were the results?

Whatever it takes

To harness the power of commitment, think about what you love passionately enough to give it all you’ve got—then give it. Commitment can spring from anything that inspires strong feeling. It can be motivated by a deeply felt aspiration, a strongly held principle, or the desire to make a difference in people’s lives. Commitment comes down to a simple moment of decision: Will you, or will you not, do whatever it takes?

Once you’ve made the decision to follow your passion no matter what, your commitment carries you through. It’s the “no matter what” part that holds all the power. You’re locked into staying the course. You may feel discouraged, even hopeless. You may lose some confidence in yourself. It doesn’t matter. None of it matters. You’ve vowed to go on trying no matter what. Circumstances become irrelevant in the face of commitment.

Whatever it is that inspires you, give yourself permission to lose yourself utterly in what you love and you’ll have no choice but to commit. Simply let your passion take over and you will harness the titanic strength of commitment.
No turning back

Commitment is all about that moment when there’s no turning back—the magic that results when you’re truly committed. It’s a mindset where there are no other options. There are no more debates, no mind-games, no procrastination. There is only action, single-minded, focused, and pure. That commitment yields a mighty power and brings with it an intense joy.

One thing to remember here is that "I'll try" doesn't work! You may get up enough courage to go for it, but you haven't really made a commitment if you tell yourself, "Well, I'll try." You're not committed to doing whatever it takes to succeed. In fact, you've given yourself an out. Now, when you fall short of the mark, you can say, "Well, I tried." When you're not committed, you leave a crack open for hesitation. Hesitation leaks energy. Energy leaks reduce your chance of success.

Power and good fortune follow commitment

To the uncommitted, the committed look strangely fortunate. Happy circumstances just seem to land in their laps. They seem to meet the people they need to know and find the opportunities they need. They see solutions where others only see obstacles. But the committed will tell you it's not because they view things differently than the non-committed—it's because they never stop looking for a way to make their dreams happen.

That's the primary characteristic of committed people: They're driven by their dreams because they're passionate about them. They hold on to their intention to make them happen no matter what challenges they face—giving up is never an option. Their commitment creates a mass of energy that propels them forward.

I GIVE MY BEST EFFORT TO ACHIEVE MY GOALS!