

W12-Gathering Agenda

GE 103 Online University Skills

Gathering Agenda for Week 12: Growth through Experience

Gathering Purposes

- Review and discuss the story of a student who persevered to complete an education
- Discuss the importance of overcoming failure
- How a growth mindset encourages persistence
- Review scripture examples of overcoming failure

Zoom Tips

- When asked to display things on “the board,” you can either [share your screen](#) and write the things on a document or use the [whiteboard](#).
- Review how to use [breakout rooms](#). Use them when dividing the gathering large group into smaller groups.

Document Preparation:

- Email the story and scriptures to students prior to the gathering.

Min.	Activities		Teaching Tips
Welcome and Devotional			
10	Welcome	The Gathering Assistant (GA) will welcome the group to the gathering, make any announcements, and give a tip from the Gathering Guide. The GA will then turn the rest of the gathering over to the lead student.	
	Introduce	Prepare the class by sharing the purposes of this week’s Gathering, which are listed above.	
	Spiritual Thought, Pray	The lead student or whoever was invited by the lead student gives a brief spiritual thought. The lead student then invites someone from the group to pray.	
	BYU-Pathway Worldwide Devotional	Students were asked to watch the BYU-Pathway Worldwide devotional this week, as contained in the course. They should have done this prior to the gathering. As a class discuss the devotional using the discussion questions provided in the course.	Look up the questions in advance so you are ready.
Student Success			
15	Read and Discuss	<p>Read about Wendy to see what she did to overcome the challenges she faced as she worked to complete a degree. Then discuss the questions that follow.</p> <p>Click here to share/read the article. If that doesn’t work, you can share the text below called “Wendy’s Way to Graduate School”</p>	

		<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendy said, “I realized that I could do it. I realized that I could do things that I didn’t think I could do.” Describe a time this semester when you had a similar realization. How did it feel? Wendy described an experience in one of her online courses, “We would spend hours online together every week just going over [our homework] and over it and over it. By the end of the semester, all four [group members] got A’s in class, and now I can do stats! I never thought in my life I could do that, but I can!” What does this say about the power of working with others as an online student? Wendy’s new-found confidence through getting a Bachelor’s degree helped her gain even more confidence to pursue a Master’s degree after she graduated. Consider something in your life in which you current lack confidence. Think about it to yourself. Do you really believe you can gain more confidence about it, and even succeed in it? 	
Student Skills Discussion			
15	Share	For one to two minutes, tell the class about one big thing you learned in this week’s Student Skills.	Come prepared to share your 1-2 minute introduction.
	Read	Invite a class member to read the story and quote of John the runner, told by Pres. Thomas S. Monson, found below this outline.	Print the story so it is easy to access at the Gathering.
	Write and Discuss	<p>Invite the class to write their answers to the writing prompt below. Write for 60-90 seconds. Then discuss the questions that follow.</p> <p>Writing prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you relate John’s story to your time as an online student? <p>Discussion Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does John’s decision to keep running tell us about his character and persistence? Who makes up your cheering audience and how can they help you? The story mentions an understanding Scorekeeper? What did Pres. Monson mean by this? How can you overcome failure to “keep running?” 	

		<p>This week you were asked to find a mentor. Briefly check in with the group to address any questions or concerns about having a mentor. Consider discussing the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can having a mentor help you have endurance as an online student? • What situations might come up that a mentor could help with? 	
Student Skills Application			
20	Share	Tell the class that you are going to look at examples from the scriptures to illustrate the idea of overcoming failure.	Say in your own words.
	Scripture Group Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Split the class into 3 groups. 2. Give each group a section of scriptures to read and discuss. The scripture sections can be found below this outline. 3. Have the groups read the scriptures and answer the questions (also found below). 4. Give the groups 5-7 minutes to read and discuss. 5. Invite the class to come back together and share who they read about and how he overcame failure. 	
	Discuss	If time allows ask the class if they can think of more examples from the scriptures of overcoming failure.	Be sure to leave 10 minutes for the Gateway discussion and closing.
	Testimony and Prayer	<p>Bear a 30-90 second testimony of the importance of learning from our mistakes and being persistent.</p> <p>Invite the members of the class to think of something specific that they want to are working to overcome. Invite them to pray specifically for heavenly help to learn from their experience.</p> <p>End with a prayer by invitation.</p>	

Wendy's Way to Graduate School

"I realized that I could do things that I didn't think I could do."

When Wendy was 12 years old, she read a book about a family counselor who fascinated her and sparked her love for psychology.

Her passion for psychology continued after high school, but when Wendy attended Ricks College (now BYU-Idaho), she had a challenging first semester. After a whirlwind of trials and difficult circumstances, Wendy paused her pursuit of higher education and moved to New Jersey to be a nanny.

After returning to Idaho, she met her husband and worked so he could attend graduate school to become a pharmacist. She was a great support to him through his schooling, but once again, her own education was put on hold.

Although Wendy didn't start school right away, she loved her time as a stay-at-home mother to her three children. As her children have grown, she's found a lot of joy being home to take care of them.

Over time, her dream of becoming a counselor finally became a reality. At the age of 40, her long-lost dream that had never really left her mind was about to come true.

After a member of her stake presidency mentioned BYU-Pathway Worldwide in an interview, Wendy decided to look into it. She'd always felt higher education was no longer a possibility due to cost. But then she said, "I realized that I could do it. I realized that I could do things that I didn't think I could do."

Later, during a church ministering visit, she was talking with a woman who said she had started PathwayConnect and hadn't finished. The two women decided to face it together; this helped Wendy receive the confidence and support she needed to begin her educational journey.

"There's just no other program that I've ever seen that has the support for returning students," Wendy said. "If I had to go from not going to college for 20 years... straight into a hardcore college program, I don't think I would have had the confidence to get through it. That year of PathwayConnect is so valuable for people in my situation who need that year to build their confidence."

Wendy faced difficult anxiety, especially with public speaking. But when she realized other students in her gathering were just as nervous, her confidence grew and she felt welcomed. Over time, Wendy thrived in her gathering as she was able to overcome her anxieties and confidently stand in front of her group to teach her classmates.

Some students might feel similar to Wendy who, as someone who didn't complete her education, had been telling herself for years that she was a failure. Through BYU-Pathway,

many students also experience the same excitement Wendy felt when she started to see herself succeed. Not only did she pass, but she earned all A's in her classes. She regained confidence in herself and her abilities in powerful ways.

Wendy worked diligently throughout her BYU-Idaho online degree, presented and coordinated through BYU-Pathway. "At the first of the semester, I thought, 'Ugh, this is going to be a long semester,'" Wendy said. "We would spend hours online together every week just going over [our homework] and over it and over it. By the end of the semester, all four [group members] got A's in class, and now I can do stats! I never thought in my life I could do that, but I can!"

Wendy changed from being terrified of speaking to her classmates to being confident in leading a classroom. Even though she disliked group work when she started, she enjoyed one of her most difficult classes because of the support of her fellow group members.

For someone who never thought education was possible because of cost, confidence, age, and timing, Wendy had a change of perspective. She knew she could do anything, and others could see it too.

"I had spent my whole life telling myself that I couldn't do it, and then I went and did it," Wendy said. "I just felt like if I could do that, what else could I do?"

All those things we convince ourselves that we can't do, we really can. We just have to be brave enough to try.

Not only did Wendy graduate with her bachelor's degree in marriage and family studies, but she's also been accepted to a graduate program and is well on her way to becoming the counselor she has always wanted to become.

She said, "It's amazing what you can do if you just put your mind to it and stick with it. Just keep going, even if you have to go slow. It's so worth it when you're finished."

Story of John Helander

At a youth conference in Kungsbacka, Sweden, John took part in a 1500-meter running race. He had no chance to win. Rather, his was the opportunity to be humiliated, mocked, derided, scorned. Perhaps John remembered another who lived long ago and far away. Wasn't He mocked? Wasn't He derided? Wasn't He scorned? But He prevailed. He won His race. Maybe John could win his.

What a race it was! Struggling, surging, pressing, the runners bolted far beyond John. There was wonderment among the spectators. Who is this runner who lags so far behind? The participants on their second lap of this two-lap race passed John while he was but halfway through the first lap. Tension mounted as the runners pressed toward the tape. Who would win? Who would place second? Then came the final burst of speed; the tape was broken. The crowd cheered; the winner was proclaimed.

The race was over—or was it? Who is this contestant who continues to run when the race is ended? He crosses the finish line on but his first lap. Doesn't the foolish lad know he has lost? Ever onward he struggles, the only participant now on the track. This is his race. This must be his victory. No one among the vast throng of spectators leaves. Every eye is on this valiant runner. He makes the final turn and moves toward the finish line. There is awe; there is admiration. Every spectator sees himself running his own race of life. As John approaches the finish line, the audience, as one, rises to its feet. There is a loud applause of acclaim. Stumbling, falling, exhausted but victorious, John Helander breaks the newly tightened tape. (Officials are human beings, too.) The cheering echoes for miles. And just maybe, if the ear is carefully attuned, that Great Scorekeeper—even the Lord—can be heard to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21).

"Each of us is a runner in the race of life. Comforting is the fact that there are many runners. Reassuring is the knowledge that our Scorekeeper is understanding. Challenging is the truth that each must run. But you and I do not run alone. That vast audience of family, friends, and leaders will cheer our courage, will applaud our determination as we rise from our stumblings and pursue our goal. The race of life is not for sprinters running on a level track. The course is marked by pitfalls and checkered with obstacles."

-- President Thomas S. Monson, [April 1987](#)

Scripture Group Activity

1. Saul of Tarsus: Acts 9:1-22
 - a. What was his failure?
 - b. How did he overcome his failure?
 - c. What can you learn from this story?

2. Simon Peter: Luke 22:31-34 and 54-62
 - a. What was his failure?
 - b. How did he overcome his failure?
 - c. What can you learn from this story?

3. Alma the Younger: Alma 36:6-24
 - a. What was his failure?
 - b. How did he overcome his failure?
 - c. What can you learn from this story?