In the poem “A noiseless patient spider,” Walt Whitman uses the work of a spider as a metaphor to that of a human’s soul. As Walt Whitman stands near the promontory, he observes a spider working hard towards its goal. He observes the patience, effort, and steadiness the spider puts in its work to achieve its goal, and then he advises the reader to follow the spider’s footpath for the reader to succeed in his life. In this poem, Walt Whitman encourages the reader to observe a spider and suggests that like the spider the human soul should never go to rest till the soul has sought and achieved its goal.

In the first stanza of the poem, the poet seems to talk more about the effort the spider puts in its work and wants the reader to take the spider as a role model for him to achieve his goal. In the line 1, the poet emphasizes the spider as “noiseless patient” since the spider is usually calm and patient when it works towards its goal. It looks like the poet is indirectly advising the readers to be calm and patient when they work towards their goal. When the poet says, “Mark’d how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,” he tries to explain that the spider examines the surroundings around it before it starts mending its web and at the meantime, he implies that human has so much to do in his life and his soul should not rest until it has aimed for a goal. In line 4, the poet uses the word filament repeatedly- “filament, filament, filament.” The poet tries to stress the readers the effort and hard work the spider puts in its work by repeatedly weaving its web to complete a task, and he wants the readers to put all their effort towards their goal. In line 5 when the poet uses the word “unreeling them” and “tirelessly speeding them,” he means to convey the readers that the spider never looks back once it has started to work towards its goal and it never gets tired working hard to accomplish it. He advises the readers that when a human starts to work towards a goal he may face many obstacles but he should never turn his back on it. Instead, he should always put himself forth to overcome those obstacles and work “tirelessly” to achieve his goal. In line 2, 3, and 4 the poet uses the sounds of “d” when he mentions the word “mark’d” and “launch’d,” which reveals the poet’s keen observance in the spider’s work, and meanwhile he wants the readers to focus and pay more attention on those words as the spider has made (mark’d) its choice and has started (launch’d) working towards its goal. Overall, in the first stanza of the poem the poet advises the reader to imitate the spider for him to achieve his goal.

In the second stanza of the poem, the poet talks more about the human soul. In the beginning and the end of the stanza the poet says, “O my soul,” (line 6) and looks like he uses the capital “O” to make the readers alert and awake their souls. When the poet says “where you stand,” he asks the reader if he has started working towards his goal similar to the spider. When the poet uses the word “surround” and “detached,” (line 7) he encourages the reader to focused (“surround”) towards achieving his goal and detach himself from obstructions and unwanted thoughts. Once again the poet makes use of the “d” sound for he wants the reader to pay attention and importance to the words “surround” and “detached.” The poet makes use of bunch of nouns in the same sentence “ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking.” He tries to emphasize that all of these qualities have equal importance and these qualities together will help the soul achieve its goal and succeed in his life. The poet separates each of the words with a comma because he wants the reader to slow down and give importance for those words. In line 8 when the poet says “seeking the spheres to connect,” he means that when the spider finishes spinning a circle in its web, it does not stop; it takes a step forward to spin more to make its web complete. Likewise, the readers should constantly put a step forward to complete their goal. In line 10 and 11 the poet uses the word “till” thrice. It looks like the poet pressurizes the reader not to halt “till” he has achieved his goal. In line 10 and 11, the poet makes use of three strong verbs -“form’d,” “hold,” “catch,” which emphasizes the readers to “form” a goal, “hold” on to it, and never to halt till he accomplishes his goal. The poet dictates the reader never to rest until he has achieved his goal.

Walt Whitman has chosen to write this poem in free verse. This poem does not have any proper form or meter. The poet has used similar ideas with different word choice in both the stanza which helps the reader to make an easy comparison with the spider’s work and the human soul; for instance, “the vacant vast surrounding” in line 3 at the first stanza and “in measureless oceans of space” in line8 at the second stanza. In addition, the word “filament” in line 4 has the same meaning as the word “gossamer thread” in line 11.

Overall, this poem is very inspiring since it encourages the human soul to be very efficient. The poet tries to boost the confidence in the readers and encourages them to set a goal and put all their effort into it so that they would succeed in their life. The more the spider spins its web, the larger the web becomes. Likewise, more a man puts effort in his goal, more successful he is going to be to accomplish it. Many famous people have taken this principle to succeed in their life. As we see from the history of mankind, many popular figures have succeeded in their life by using this principle.