

CHAPTER ONE

PERSEVERANCE



TECH N9NE

Although you would never know by his current status as one of the highest-selling and most successful independent hip-hop artists of all time, the journey to the top of the mountain was a bumpy one for rapper **Tech N9ne**. But the ups-and-downs of his career, and the fact that he never gave up, make his story a perfect example of the power of **perseverance**.

Born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Tech N9ne grew up in one of the city's most well-known gang neighborhoods, 57th street. "I come from a blood neighborhood. A gang bang neighborhood," he says. It was the kind of place that many young black men don't make it out of, either falling victim to deadly violence or losing years of their lives to the prison system.

Complicating matters even more was the fact that his chief inspiration, his mother, was constantly in and out of hospitals dealing with complications from multiple afflictions. "My mom, real sick, still to this day. She's better now. She just came out of meningitis of the brain. She had epilepsy since she was 18. Seizures, the worst ones," he says. "Later on in her life, lupus happened. Then diabetes just happened like two years ago because she got kinda big. 2009 pancreatitis happened from all the medicine, I think. All the medicine they gave her. She made it through that; she almost died."

Despite these tough circumstances, Tech N9ne pushed on, having his first success as a dancer and then as a rapper known for his rapid-fire rhymes. In an era when most hip-hop artists were from large metropolitan cities like New York or Los Angeles, many record labels didn't take him seriously at first. Thankfully, his talent made them reconsider.

His crew signed their first record deal in 1993 with Perspective Records, a label owned by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis who were widely known for producing Janet Jackson. Unfortunately, his group was dropped from the label before any music was ever released, then subsequently broke up.

He got his second record deal with the Quincy Jones-owned Qwest Records, a deal that also fell through before any music was ever released.

His third record deal came via JCOR and Interscope records. His album *Anghellic* was finally released in 2001 and was successful, but business and creative differences caused his relationship with the label to sour. In a 2014 interview on the Combat Jack Show, Tech N9ne stated that the fallout began when the label began pressuring him to sound like the Wu-Tang Clan, who was hot at the time. “I have to have something for them to be interested. They saw something. They saw the same thing I saw, but the people that they hired to work with me wanted me to clone Wu-Tang at the time,” he says. “I was like that’s dope but I gotta do me.” He refused to change his style. This friction led to his eventual departure from the label. Without a record deal for the third time, he returned home to Kansas City to do some soul-searching. “I just felt like after so many things that didn’t work--like Perspective [Records] didn’t work, Qwest and Warner didn’t work, Interscope and JCOR didn’t work--you have to regroup,” he said about his departure from the label.

Although Tech N9ne admitted that the failures made him think he was cursed, he kept pushing his music. A local performance led to meeting Travis O’Guinn, who was a local business-owner and huge fan of his music. Their friendship eventually turned into the business partnership that gave birth to his record label, Strange Music, where Tech N9ne would set the creative vision and Travis would handle the business.

With the proper team in place, Tech N9ne was finally free to release his music independently. He began touring relentlessly, hoping his grassroots approach and energetic stage show would connect with fans across the country. He did well in some cities but struggled in others. Even when only seven people attended his first show in San Diego, he didn’t let it discourage him. “We performed like there were seven thousand. Then we went back to San Diego. You know, some people, they just won’t come back after that,” he says. “We did that show, came back, and it was twenty people. Came back again, it was 50 people. Came back again. 100, 200, 300 people.” Eventually his shows had to get moved into the House of Blues, which held 1,000 people and sold out there as well.

Even though his first nationwide tour lost money, he never gave up. In fact, the more setbacks he experienced, the harder he pushed. In 2005, he experienced a touring artist’s worst nightmare--a near-death automobile accident. While driving through a

snowstorm in Billings, Montana, their driver lost control of their van, causing it to slide off a steep embankment. The van flipped over five times and some members of his crew were even partially ejected from the vehicle. Miraculously, no one was injured. “We all came out unscathed,” his label-mate Krizz Kaliko says. “Cut had a couple of scratches. Tech had a cut in his mouth from some glass or something. And we all came out unscathed.”

In 2007, his best friend Brian Dennis--the first person to paint his face for his stage shows--was murdered in a crime of passion by his girlfriend's ex-husband. “A girl he was with had an ex-husband who was still in love with her,” he recalls. “He came home on Christmas eve and he saw somebody moving around in their house. He told Kim to stay in the car. Her daughter Alyssa was young, like five or something; I don’t know, maybe younger. Brian went in; the dude shot him. Killed him. Went out to the car. Shot Kim, his ex-wife, and shot himself in front of little Alyssa.” It was a tough loss for Tech N9ne, so from that day forward, he vowed to pay tribute to his deceased best friend. “I wear the face paint in honor of my homie. That’s my best friend that died,” he says.

Despite all of these personal and professional setbacks, Tech N9ne persevered. His energetic stage show is mentioned among the best in hip-hop, helping him draw new and old fans to venues all over the world with each new release. “If you want people to keep coming to your show, it’s about that,” he says. “And I think that’s why we’re still on the incline too, because people wanna show their friends, you gotta see this.” Over the last twenty years he’s become one of the biggest concert draws in independent hip-hop, known for his grueling 70-city tours that sell out big cities and consistently visit smaller markets that are routinely skipped by larger acts.

Not only do fans come out to shows, they buy his albums in force. Since 2001, Tech N9ne has released six albums that have each sold more than 100,000 copies, three that have sold over 200,000 copies, and one that has sold over 300,000 copies--all independently. He’s sold over two-million total records without being on a major label, which earned him placement on Forbes Magazine’s list of the highest-earning hip-hop artists of 2013 and 2014.

And, just when it looked like things couldn't get any better, he scored the biggest hit of his career in 2014 when his single "Fragile" featuring Kendrick Lamar peaked at #11 on the Billboard charts, over twenty years after his career began. It was an unprecedented accomplishment for someone who had been in the industry for so long already. "To have 'Fragile' being the one, some real shit on the radio, that's just beautiful to me," he says. "It lets me know that I can do whatever the fuck I wanna do, still."

That sense of longevity has done wonders for Tech N9ne's confidence. "I'm still here though. I'm independent. I use my own money. Me and my partner Travis O'Guinn," he says. "I feel immortal in it. I feel like Jay-Z might feel. You know because he's been in it. I feel like Nas might feel. I feel like Scarface might feel. You know what I'm saying. The dudes that have been in it since the beginning and still here. Still able to sell. We still on the incline."

Pretty good for a guy who wasn't even supposed to make it out of Kansas City.

ROC MARCIANO

If there was one artist who has single-handedly shaped the sound of underground hip-hop for the last decade, it would be Long Island rapper **Roc Marciano**. From 2010 through 2020, he has reigned as arguably the most influential artist in underground hip-hop. Not only has he revived and innovated the style of rugged east coast hip-hop that many thought was dead, but he's also changed the way it was marketed and sold to the public. While it would be easy to look at his current status and think his success was inevitable, there were many times along the way when everything was in doubt. Thankfully, Roc Marciano was blessed with a strong sense of **perseverance** that has helped him stay the course when the ride to the top was anything but smooth.

Hailing from Long Island, New York--the same hometown as hip-hop legends De La Soul, Rakim, Busta Rhymes, and EPMD--Roc Marciano grew up with an insatiable love for hip-hop. Although hip-hop music was all around him and a part of his daily soundtrack, he found very little time to focus on it because of his living situation. He grew up in the Terrace Avenue apartments, one of the most dangerous housing projects in

all of New York. “It’s a notorious drug block. One of the worst blocks in America,” he says. Like most of his peers who grew up there, Roc entered the street life early, doing what he had to do to get money. “I’m from the projects. All my friends got into trouble and hustled and sold and everything,” he says. “You learn the hard way. I was hard-headed. I learnt the hard way. I wasn’t the worst cat, but I got into trouble.”

Despite the bleak outlook for anyone living the street life, there was one glimmer of hope--hip-hop. When it came to rhyming, Roc was a natural. “When I first started rhyming, I could tell from people’s reaction. All my homies...it wasn’t just like ‘yo you nice.’ It was like ‘no, you special. You got a future in this,’” he says. Considering how heavy he was in the streets, that early encouragement meant a lot. He understood that music could be his ticket out of the projects and hustling, but only if he could focus on it more. “I wasn’t really on hip-hop all the time,” he remembers. “Mainly, I was just trying to survive, but I would still mess with music.”

The time he spent working on music would soon start to pay off. Busta Rhymes, who had just left his group Leaders of the New School, was planning his solo career and first major label release. He also wanted to develop a new group of artists named the Flipmode Squad to bring with him. Busta thought Roc’s crew would be a perfect fit. “I was offered a deal in my teenage years. My homie Asir was with me. We were in a group together,” he says. “Busta tried to sign us to FlipMode when there was no FlipMode Squad.” Unfortunately, the deal fell apart due to Roc’s attitude. “Back at that time my ego was big,” he admits. “I was like where the money at? I thought I was like Michael Jackson. I know I’m gonna blow. I was young and feisty.” Even though they didn’t know much about the music industry, the teenage group expected much more than what Busta could offer at the time. They opted to not sign the record deal, assuming it would just be a matter of time before they got another one. No other deals for the group ever materialized and they soon went their separate ways. Without a deal, Roc was back to the street life and making music on the side.

A couple of years later, in 1996, Busta Rhymes would release his debut album *The Coming*. The album was a massive success and quickly went platinum. This prompted the label to push for his immediate follow-up albums *When Disaster Strikes* in 1997 and *Extinction Level Event* in 1998, which also went platinum. All of the sudden,

Busta Rhymes was in the driver's seat, able to push side-projects through that were previously in doubt. First up was the group that he tried to sign Roc to several years prior, the Flipmode Squad, who would release their debut album in 1998. With momentum on his side, Busta started inquiring about Roc, hoping to sign him again. "I know his younger brother. I went to school with him," Roc says. "He would always be like what's up with Roc? He got in touch with me and he was like yo if you still nice like you were back then, I got a deal for you. I was like yeah no doubt. So I got in touch with him."

Now signed with one of the hottest artists in the industry, who was committed to his success, Roc was encouraged to get to work. "Bus believed in me. I love Busta. That's my brother," he says. Busta Rhymes believed in Roc's talents so much that one of the first things he did was put him on his song "The Heist" with Raekwon and Ghostface Killah of the Wu-Tang Clan. It was an almost unprecedented look for someone in his position. "He really felt like I was that caliber," he says. "That's why he put me on that record with them and I held my own." Anywhere Busta could find an opportunity to gain notoriety or make money, he would pass it on to Roc to make sure he was taken care of while they worked towards introducing him on the next Flipmode album. But there was one problem: the release of a second Flipmode album wasn't a sure thing anymore. "So when he put his album out, his next album *Anarchy*, it didn't do what they needed to make sure Flipmode was a guarantee," Roc said. "Flipmode wasn't gonna be a guarantee unless Busta sold millions. *Anarchy*, to me, was a success. It was a critical success, but it didn't blow out the water like the last one. So it was like uhhh I don't know when FlipMode is gonna come out now. Weeks turned into months, and months turned into years, with no commitment from the record label that all the work they were doing on the Flipmode album would see the light of day.

Having already joined the crew late, Roc had missed their first album and felt like he was stuck in limbo; waiting for his career to be launched by a release that might never come out. The frustration started to set in. He went to Busta and asked to be released from the deal. "I remember telling Bus bro I don't mind going back to the streets," he says. "I felt like you brought me here and that's enough. Just to get me into the business. You don't gotta carry me. I appreciate everything you've done. From here

I'm willing to stand on my own." Although there was a lot of tension over his decision, Busta eventually relented and released him from the deal.

Things weren't all roses once Roc was free from the record deal. The access he had to those bigger paychecks was gone and the contacts immediately dried up. "It was a tough time," he says. "I'll be honest, when I stopped rocking with Bus, a lot of the industry people and the people I knew, all of that was cut off. And it wasn't because of his word; it was because that's just how the industry is." Without a record deal and without those high profile affiliations, he was back to where he started, hustling. "There was parts when I wasn't making music; I was back in the streets. Just trying to get some money," he says. The transition back to being unsigned was rough, but his love of the craft became the fuel that pushed him to keep writing and recording. Even when he was out of sight, his love for the music never faltered. He continued to work as a soloist and recorded with a group he created called The U.N.

Things slowly started to turn around. In 2004, The U.N.'s debut album (featuring production by Pete Rock, Large Professor, and Roc Marciano) was released on an independent label owned by Carson Daly, 456 Entertainment. The album wasn't commercially successful but it made an impact with hardcore rap fans and critics. More importantly, it announced Roc Marciano's return. He parlayed that album into a solo deal with SRC Records, owned by Steve Rifkind, the former owner of Loud Records. Roc was finally on a platform that would allow him to get his music out consistently. His first solo album was almost finished and things were starting to look up again. It would be short-lived. "They chopped the deal and let us go for stuff out of my control; relationships in-between me and the higher ups that had nothing to do with me," he says, citing clashes between his management and the label. "So I wasn't in the highest of spirits."

The frustration of losing yet another record deal after spending years writing and recording was discouraging, but Roc wasn't one to give up so easily. He didn't have a deal, but he did have something more important--his music. "It was like yo, you can slide and take your man with you type of thing, but he let me keep my music," he says. "So I wanna thank him for that. Thank you Steve Rifkind for letting me keep my album." That album, *Marcberg*, would wind up being the turning point in his career.

He tried to shop the album, but no labels were interested. “I shopped it around to different labels. People I’m ashamed to even say was like yeah we good, everybody was good,” he says. Realizing he was on his own, and just wanting the album to finally be released, he decided to release *Marcberg* himself independently in 2010. Things were slow at first. None of the popular hip-hop blogs or websites covered it. “I was seeing everything except my joint. Some stuff it was frustrating me like, for real? This dude better than me? All this stuff is better than Marcberg? So I was like alright we just gonna keep pushing,” he says.

Things didn’t change until he received an unexpected call from the Brooklyn rapper Sean Price, asking him to send him the beat for the song “Snow” because he wanted to do a remix for it. Roc sent it right over. That remix gave Roc the co-sign he needed. “If the blogs wasn’t messing with me, they was messing with P. So P forced their hand,” he says. “People started coming out like yeah he is dope. We do like him.” Soon enough everybody was writing about *Marcberg*. By the end of the year, *Marcberg* had taken off and was hailed as one of the best releases of the year.

Even more impressive than the album’s commercial and critical success was its impact on the culture. Prior to *Marcberg*, traditional New York hip-hop was considered dated and uncool to the casual rap fan. Roc Marciano changed all of that. The content was as street as possible but the production was more dusty and lo-fi than anything before it. Where most boom bap albums focused on the drum programming and headnod factor, Roc deliberately rhymed over beats that either had very sparse drums or no drums at all. This put his vocals in the forefront and made his rhymes and personality stand out more. “Putting the lyrics in the front. Letting the drums not beat the vocalist up,” he says. “It’s really just outside of the industry standards. It’s anti-establishment.” Oftentimes the rhymes had a stream-of-consciousness feeling to them, where wordplay and being clever took priority over song structure. There were no scratched hooks and, in many instances, no hooks at all. The best part was that it never sounded like he was trying to be different, it just sounded like an artist creating freely; one who was more concerned with painting a sonic picture the way he saw fit than following the existing formulas. *Marcberg* has since been hailed a classic, creating an

entire wave of street rappers influenced by its production and vocal styles, often copying it entirely.

Since then, Roc Marciano hasn't looked back, releasing music at a steady clip almost every year. He's collaborated with Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest, Prodigy of Mobb Deep, The Alchemist, DJ Muggs of Cypress Hill, Evidence, Action Bronson, Oh No, and many others. His shows and tours sell out across the country. He now sells his albums directly to his fans on his website, who are willing to pay \$30 for a single download of his music. This loyal following has allowed him to make more money than he's ever made in his career. Because he persevered, Roc Marciano is now one of the most influential and successful artists in independent hip-hop.

SUPASTITION

Coming off his 60-city, nationwide tour in 2015, North Carolina rapper **Supastition** had a lot of momentum on his side. The tour introduced him to new fans across the country, his *Gold Standard* album had sold more copies faster than his previous releases, and the tour's visibility had high profile rappers and producers wanting to work with him. It was quite the resurgence for an artist who had been releasing music independently for almost twenty years already.

Not only did the tour change his visibility, but it also gave him a new focus for moving forward. "That experience just opened up a lot of things for me," he recalled. "I knew what I needed to do. I realized what I was doing wrong, not even just as far as touring, but as an artist too. I wanted to expand and rebrand. And from that point on, I knew what I needed to do."

When he returned from the road, he immediately got to work on two new solo projects, one produced by Stoope and the other by Nottz--both high-profile producers. Knowing how important these albums would be in keeping his momentum going and raising his profile even more, Supastition locked in, writing and recording some of his best material to date. For those who knew he had these projects in the wings, the excitement was high, as most expected the albums to be released the following year.

Unfortunately, things didn't go according to plan. His part of the writing and recording was finished, but weeks, months, and then years passed with no updates on the two highly-anticipated projects. Despite his best efforts, scheduling problems and creative challenges left both projects unfinished. Feeling discouraged, Supastition had to accept that he had no control over their completion and wasn't sure if they would ever be released. "You put all of your energy into a project and it doesn't come out. That's very discouraging," he admitted. "And every collaboration album is like a marriage. So you start to think, well the first marriage didn't work, the second marriage didn't work. You start to think, is this me? Am I the common denominator in these situations? So I just had to reevaluate."

His reevaluation wasn't restricted to just music. At home, a similar inspection led to the decision to send his wife back to school. "I knew I wanted to put my wife through school because for a long time she had always supported me," he remembers. "People don't look at it from the other way. They think, well I'm out here doing this for us, which is cool, but at the same time we've been together for twenty years and it's always kinda been about me and my dreams. So I stepped back and I wanted to create a career for her because she's so used to just having jobs."

Given the many sacrifices his wife had made for his career, her education was an endeavor that he gladly supported and financed, but it wasn't without drawbacks. One drawback was that it pushed him further away from music at a time when he had a lot of momentum going in his favor. But it was an investment he was more than willing to make. He put his head down and made it work.

Time passed quickly. Before he knew it, years had passed without any new music, the two highly-anticipated projects he had recorded were officially in limbo and probably never coming out, and his previous buzz had died down significantly. On his social media platforms, he noticed that his followers now had a luke-warm response to posts that would normally generate a lot of excitement. Even the checks from his music distributor had started dwindling in size. On one hand, his family was in a much better situation, but on the other hand, his music career was in doubt. "Once we got comfortable again, I knew that that's when I wanted to start doing music again. I knew it was gonna be a year or two, but I didn't know it would be four years," he

admitted. Although he was discouraged that so much time had passed, he was more focused than ever on returning properly.

His first order of business was production. The two shelved projects and his time away from music made him realize that the biggest variable in releasing albums was production, and as long as he depended on other people for beats, he would always be at the mercy of the producer's schedule. Supastition decided to change that by getting more serious about learning production. He figured that the better he got at production, the more control he would have over his music being released. "I always knew how to make beats, but I just decided one day to stop playing around. I know how to make beats, let me just go ahead and do what I need to do," he recalls of his decision to become a better producer. "I didn't stop rapping, but I put rhyming aside because I feel like that's never gonna go anywhere since I've been doing it for so long. I just locked in on the beats and started making beats for almost two years straight."

The results were rapid. In a short amount of time, he went from production hobbyist to production enthusiast. He got drum breaks and samples wherever he could find them and even had his manager send him samples to chop up. Eventually, the beats started piling up. "I looked up one day and I had 100 beats sitting there sitting in a folder. I wasn't trying to be that dude shopping beats to people so I figured I might as well rap to these joints." As his output increased, he grew more comfortable with sharing his beats with others. "That's what really got me going. And social media helped a lot too because I would post little joints here and there," he remembers.

Before Supastition knew it, he had a new, self-produced, project called the *Sacrifice EP* finished. A turnaround that he thought would take a year or two had taken four years. Excited to share his new project, he got to work on the mixing and artwork to prepare it for its release.

It was during this time that he faced the biggest obstacle of all. His wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. The life-threatening diagnosis meant his plans and role in the family changed almost overnight. "It literally went to me, every day helping her walk, feeding her, helping her get dressed, helping her bathe, and everything for like two or three weeks straight," he recalls. It was a trying time for his family, and understandably, music was the furthest thing from his mind. "I was just so engulfed with

that, trying to make sure I was taking care of that,” he stated. As a result, he immediately scrapped his plans for releasing his new music.

Things would have stayed that way had his wife not prodded him to get back to what made him so happy--making music. “She just told me, look you can’t stop living your life to take care of me. I know you wanna take care of me but you have to keep doing what you’re doing. Work on some music or do something. I’m fine,” he says she told him. “She was like you got a project that you were working on. I was like I’m probably not gonna put that out this year. And she's like why not? It can’t hurt anything. So that’s what I ended up doing.”

With his wife’s recovery on the horizon and her blessing, he resumed plans to release his music again. After four years away from music and many ups and downs, Supastition finally announced the release of the Sacrifice EP to his fans. Their response wasn’t what he expected; it was much more. “Usually when I put out a project people are like ‘yo this is dope.’ But now I see messages like ‘this album spoke to me, what I’m going through,’” he described. “Heartfelt messages from fans, from artists, and different things like that.”

The music he made during the toughest stretch of his career was resonating with his fans in a way that none of his previous releases had. He was initially reluctant to press physical copies of the album but finally decided to get a small run of limited-edition CDs. They sold out in a week. He ordered another run of CDs. They sold out in a week as well. All the momentum he felt he had lost was back and his project was being supported by fans in a way he hadn’t seen in his twenty-year music career. It was the ultimate validation for an artist who had gone through so much.

From losing two albums worth of his best material, to his wife being diagnosed with cancer, to learning how to produce—Supastition had persevered. And his fans were rewarding him for it. Not only was his name buzzing again, but he was able to use the money from his album’s sales to help offset some of his wife’s medical bills.

To other artists experiencing hard times, he says, “it doesn’t have to be either or. It doesn’t have to be I’m just gonna do this music shit or I’m just gonna work a job. You can do both. You can do both until one outweighs the other. Until one pays more than the other.” He stresses that many artists create additional pressure for

themselves because they are too prideful to work regular jobs while working on their art, which compounds bad situations when they happen. His family and financial plan gave him the foundation he needed to stay inspired enough to keep creating during the worst of times.

Now, he's reaping the rewards for his perseverance.

While Tech N9ne is an amazing rapper, much of his success can be tied to his ability to bounce back from adversity. He made it out of one of the toughest neighborhoods in his city. He lost friends, lost record deals, and faced near-death accidents. Despite these odds, Tech N9ne found the mental strength to hold on and persevere.

Roc Marciano grew up heavily in the street life where going to jail or ending up dead are the most likely outcomes. His group lost their first record deal because of his ego. He got signed but was left in limbo for several years, prompting him to leave the label. He got signed again and got dropped from the label. He finally released his album independently, but people ignored it at first. Considering how many setbacks Roc Marciano experienced in his career, he would've been totally justified in abandoning his dream. Thankfully his sense of perseverance didn't let that happen.

Supastition was faced with several obstacles that impacted his ability to put out music. He had to find inspiration after losing two albums worth of material, learn how to make beats, finance his wife's education, and then help her recover from breast cancer. There were times when he felt discouraged and questioned whether it was worth it, but he pushed on and found more success than ever.

Several years ago, a video clip of Beyonce falling down on stage at one of her shows went viral on the internet. Some people focused on the fact that she fell down and how embarrassing it was. Other people focused on how quickly she got up without losing a beat. We saw the resilience of a woman who had been taught since childhood that perseverance is a prerequisite to success, but most people were too caught up in the spectacle to see the lesson. I don't think anybody would argue that Beyoncé is successful because she's technically the best singer of her era. Clearly she isn't. But if you've ever

wondered why she's so successful, look no further than that video. She refuses to stay down when she falls.

If pursuing art is what you really want to do, then you must have the ability to bounce back from adversity. You will experience setbacks and hardships. You will take losses. In fact, you should expect them. But understand, you will never reach your goals if you remain on the ground after being put there. If you cannot learn to bounce back, you will be just another person who's too busy complaining about taking a loss than figuring out how to bounce back from it.

Perseverance is the first trait of successful hip-hop artists.

HOW TO DEVELOP PERSEVERANCE:

1. **Go Through Something** - Most people avoid their problems because they fear conflict and stress, but making it through those situations is what teaches you perseverance. Instead of avoiding your problems, make a conscious effort to take them head-on, with the understanding that getting through them will develop your ability to persevere. As you continue to make it through these situations successfully, your sense of perseverance will develop.
2. **Study the Best** - The next time you watch a movie, choose one about someone who overcomes obstacles. The next time you read a book, choose the autobiography of someone who survived hard times. Identify the people in your life who don't have it easy, but continue to press forward with a positive attitude. The more you internalize these stories of perseverance, the more you will believe you're capable of doing the same thing.
3. **Revisit Your Past** - What are your biggest personal and professional achievements from the last five years? What challenges did you have to face to make them happen? Make note of everything you went through to achieve those goals. This will remind you that you have a history of perseverance.
4. **Write It Down** - It can be very easy to forget all the things you've been through if you're not actively keeping track of the moment. This is why it's important to document your experiences. Whether you choose to do it through writing, recording, visual art, or even taking pictures--writing things down will give you something tangible to eventually look back on when you're doubting yourself.
5. **Define Your Problems** - Oftentimes, simply defining your problems is the key to staying the course long enough to solve them. Take a moment to clearly define the problems you're facing. Are they short-term or long-term? Are they fixable or beyond your control? As your understanding of your problems becomes clearer, so will your understanding of what it takes to solve them. You will eventually see that most of your problems can be fixed if they're broken down into smaller and more manageable pieces.

6. **Seek Out Challenges** - Find challenges in everything around you--even in your mundane daily activities. Do them to develop your sense of determination and grit. Train your mind and body to not give up, with the understanding it will prepare you to persevere through much larger and more difficult tasks.
7. **Revisit Your Why** - Your “why” is the core motivation behind everything you do and should inspire you to keep going when things get difficult. While most people can give up because they aren’t working towards anything larger than themselves, your “why” will prevent you from giving up so easily. Remind yourself why you do what you do, and use that energy to push through.