

Success after 960 tries

At first, she didn't succeed, but she tried and tried again – 960 times!

Grandmother Cha Sa-soon lived alone in the remote village of Sinchon, surrounded by mountains and about 112 miles south of Seoul, South Korea. Ms. Cha always wanted to learn to drive, but didn't try to get a license until she was in her 60s.



She failed the written part of the driving test – not once, twice or 10 times, but 959 times. Finally, she got her license – on her 960th try.

Having never driven, a lot of the test terminology was new to her, but she refused to quit. On the actual road test, she only failed four times before getting passing marks.

Ms. Cha's doggedness made her a celebrity because that quality is held in high esteem by Koreans. "When she finally got her license, we all went out in cheers and hugged her, giving her flowers," said Park Su-yeon, an instructor at Jeonbuk Driving School where she attended. "It felt like a huge burden falling off our back. We didn't have the guts to tell her to quit because she kept showing up."

Ms. Park said she was not worried about any risk to the public because it was the written test, not the driving skill and road tests, that she failed so many times.

Ironically, Cha Sa-soon's name in Korean means "vehicle," and she has appeared on primetime television in a commercial for Hyundai, which presented her with a \$16,800 Kia Soul.



Ms. Cha said she had always envied people who could drive, but it was not until she was in her 60s that she got around to trying for a license. "I was too busy raising my four children," she said. "Eventually they all grew up and went away, and my husband died several years ago, and I had more time for myself. I wanted to get a driver's license, so I could take my grandchildren to the zoo."

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Upon receipt of her license, all of Korea knew about her persistence. Her triumph was celebrated, and she became a national hero.

All because she wouldn't give up.

Who besides Grandmother Cha Sa-soon has ever had to take a driving test 960 times before passing it? And who besides Grandmother Cha Sa-soon has ever become a national hero for passing the written part of a driving test?

The more difficult the test, the sweeter it is when we finally prevail.

Persistence has its reward. The Bible says so:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (Galatians 6:9 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter