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# The Trait of Persistence in Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario

## Introduction

Mothers. They mean the world to us and sacrifice everything for our happiness. But just imagine your mother going to the extent of leaving the country, not knowing how long she would go without seeing you; for your future and your happiness. In the non-fiction novel, Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario the main character's mother 'Lourdes' loves her dear family, but notices her family is struggling. To make sure her children have full bellies and obtain an education, she ventures out to the United States and gets a job as a Nanny. Lourdes earns money from her American job and sends money home to support her struggling family. Enrique may love the joys that riches can bring, but money can't give him the love and affection of a mother. Once Enrique was 17, he determines that he is going to be reunited with his mother and immigrate from Honduras to the United States. Throughout all stages of the book, Enrique unquestionably displays the trait 'persistence'.

## Setting of Goal and a Year of Suffering

From the inception of Enrique's Journey, Enrique exhibits persistence. Enrique knows all of the appalling conditions and situations that can arise on the way to the U.S. Such as, freight trains causing mutilations and murderous gangsters seeking immigrants to loot. Enrique realizes that his mother is what he needs the most in his life so, Enrique sets a goal. "He makes himself one promise: I'm going to reach the United States, even if it takes one year." (50). Enrique will not stray from immigrating because reuniting with his mother is essential to him. He will be persistent and go through an entire year of suffering in struggling conditions, not knowing what's next if it means he can reunite with his dear mother, Lourdes.

## Working for a Limited Quantity of Money

In the central stages of the novel, Enrique has already illegally immigrated across many state checkpoints. In this component of the book, Enrique needed to get in contact with his mother. He desired to acquire a particularly precise amount of money for 2 phone calls, which was 100 pesos (\$10). Enrique finds the opportunity to achieve a job as a car washer. "The moon is out, but it is 90 degrees...Between then and 4 am, he scrambles after every car that pulls in. In eight hours, he makes 20 pesos." (150). Through 8 hours of washing cars in 90-degree weather, Enrique discovered the strength within him to power through to obtain his goal. Leaving him with 20 pesos (\$2). Enrique demonstrates such persistence through his job, working for even a limited quantity of money. Persistence is an attribute Enrique must acquire if he wants to make his way to the states.

## Sending Money to the Child

Enrique the end of the novel is still persistent by keeping strong and sticking to what's best. Enrique eventually made it to his mother in Florida. He and his mother argued and went through

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trials but transformed to become more affectionate again. His girlfriend 'Maria Isabel' back home in Honduras was pregnant and had a baby girl. She raised their child in Honduras. Enrique always called Maria Isabel about how he couldn't go on without her and feared that she may have found love with another man, but she also loved Enrique. Maria made the same decision Lourdes did when Enrique was a child, by moving to the U.S. but leaving their child back home. Maria Isabel made her way to the United States and achieved a job, living with Enrique. Both of them sending her money they've earned from their jobs. They keep in touch with their daughter Jasmin, "Enrique and Maria Isabel call their daughter once or twice a week from Florida.... She tells them she wants to be with them in the United States."(241). Enrique knows that this is for the best and that he and Maria Isabel will have to be persistent and continue to send their money to Maria for education and food. It may be difficult but they push through for what's best.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the trait of persistence is without a doubt displayed by Enrique throughout the entire novel Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario. From willing to be on the immigration path for a long time, to working through rough times, to push through the hard times for what is best. Without his persistence and work ethic, Enrique could have easily given up and never would have seen his mother again or died from the horrible situations that people on the immigration path can get into. Overall Enrique exhibited persistence throughout the entire duration of the book, no matter the situation.