

An Odysseus without determination is like a night with no moon. Determination is Odysseus's most prominent personality trait. "Determined" means 'to make a firm decision and resolve not to change it.' Some synonyms of 'determined' are resolute, purposeful, unwavering and steadfast. 'Determination' is made up of 5 morphemes; one prefix, one base element, and three suffixes. The word sum is: de+term+in(e)+at(e)+ion. The base element is 'term'. 'Term' comes from the Latin root, *terminus*. Terminus was the Roman god of boundaries, who guarded the city limits. Consequently, words with the base element 'term' have a sense of finality, ending, boundaries or limits. 'Determined' means you have made your *final* decision and will push yourself to the *limits* to succeed. Odysseus's extreme determination is what sets him apart from other mortals. It is what helps him finally reach his wife and son. Odysseus's determination is exhibited well in three parts of *The Odyssey*: in the Land of the Lotus Eaters, when his men release the winds, and when he clings to the tree over Charybdis.

The first time Odysseus shows determination is in the Land of the Lotus Eaters. Odysseus's ships were blown off course and landed in this realm. The locals offered his men fruit from the Lotus plant, which instilled a calm elation into anyone who ate it; it was an ancient drug. Odysseus was the only one who didn't eat the fruit, possibly because he was skeptical, suspicious or just chose not to. He forced them to leave. On page 92 he states, "*When I saw what had happened, I was dismayed and I had to drag them forcibly back to the ships...Lucky that I did not taste that fruit!*" This shows that Odysseus possesses great willpower and strength of character. It would have been so easy, so simple to forget his family and home with the help of the drugged fruit. However, Odysseus pines for Ithaca and was determined to reach home once more. In this section, Homer is trying to show that Odysseus will not surrender to temptation. Not even a drug can stop him. He is determined to get home, and this allows him to disregard any distractions and continue on his journey.

The second time that Odysseus expresses powerful determination is when his men release the winds. His ships were actually *in sight* of Ithaca, his home, when his men disobeyed him and freed Aeolus's winds. This blasted them all the way back to Aeolia, far away from their home. On page 113, Odysseus declares, "*In my grief I thought that I should cast myself overboard and drown, rather than face such a tragedy. But my spirit held me, made me cling to the rail and endure it all.*" The quote itself suggests a huge amount of determination, even if you didn't know the context. Most people at this point would give up, quit, back down; but not Odysseus. He is determined to keep going. He decides that he will stop at nothing to reach Penelope and Telemachus. Even if the gods are working against him, he will face the gods! It is at this moment when it really shows how strong his spirit is.

The last time that Odysseus's determination is displayed is when he clutches the tree branch above Charybdis. As Charybdis started to suck down the ocean, Odysseus leapt onto a tree sticking out of the rocks. "*For hours I hung to that trunk, unable to reach the firm ground or even get a good foothold, while Charybdis gulped the ocean down.*" he states on page 149. This is the instant of determination at its finest. The majority would consider the situation beyond hope. Most would surrender, drop from the tree. But Odysseus holds on. In the images, there is sweat dripping from his face and his teeth are clenched. This suggests that he is suffering and in pain. However, he doesn't let go. This is the final example of Odysseus' determination.

Determination is what keeps Odysseus going. I think Penelope and Telemachus were the fuel for his determination, so to speak. He wanted to come home because he had something to come home to. Determination isn't always a good thing. Usually it is, because it shows strength of character. But you can be determined to do *bad* things. For instance, Odysseus was determined to exact revenge on the suitors, so he murdered them all. Do all heroes have determination? I don't think so. I think determination is a quality taken for granted. However, most heroes actually don't have it. You can perform one brave, heroic act, making yourself a "hero", but you don't have to be determined to do it. This is what makes Odysseus so special, the fact that he never gives up. Odysseus is definitely one in a million.