



# CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

CARL SOMMER

## THE LITTLE RED TRAIN

### About the Book

Trapped high on a mountain by deep snow, hungry townspeople wait desperately for one of the three big trains to bring them food, but they all refuse to go up the mountain. Seeing the desperate situation, The Little Red Train and a family of brave helpers decide to go up the mountain in spite of the ridicule from the big trains. The Little Red Train and its helpers overcome severe obstacles and save the people from starvation.

In this exciting and vividly illustrated book, Carl Sommer shows the value of perseverance, compassion, and civic virtue, and children learn to sing the song of, Try! Try! Try!



### Main Virtues

**Perseverance/Compassion/Civic Virtue**

### Other Virtues

Appreciation, Assertiveness, Caring, Cheerfulness, Citizenship, Commitment, Community Service, Cooperation, Courage, Creativity, Diligence, Generosity, Initiative, Kindness, Patience, Positive Mental Attitude, Respect for Humankind, Responsibility, and Self-Discipline



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## **Pride—Looking Down on Others**

Whenever The Little Red Train pulled into the yard to load up with fuel, the big trains would boast, “You’re just a little train that can travel only in the valley. Only *we* are strong enough to go up the steep mountain!”

The big trains were proud and looked down on others.

## **Compassion for Others**

A girl said to The Little Red Train, “If the people on the mountain don’t get food, they will die.”

“We can’t let the people die,” said The Little Red Train. “If the big trains won’t go, I’ll find some helpers, and we’ll try to make it up the mountain.”

The Little Red Train had compassion for others.

## **Being Persecuted for Doing What’s Right**

When the big trains heard that The Little Red Train wanted to go up the mountain, they roared with laughter and said, “You can’t go up the mountain in that deep snow! You can’t even make it up the mountain when there is no snow!”

“The least I can do is try to help the poor people,” answered The Little Red Train.

The big trains made fun of The Little Red Train. Sometimes we are made fun of and get persecuted because we want to do what is right. We should keep on doing what is right regardless of what others say.

## **Perseverance**

“Puff! Puff! Puff!” went The Little Red Train as he started up the mountain. Never before had he gone so slowly.

As he pushed his way through the deep snow, he said, “Let’s do our best and try. The people on the mountain really need our help.”

Then The Little Red Train and the helpers began singing:

Try, try, try,  
We’ll do our best and try.  
Mountains we will try to scale,  
Though it’s hard and we may fail.  
Try, try, try,  
We’ll do our best and try.  
We’ll try!

Regardless of how difficult it was, The Little Red Train and its helpers were determined to keep on trying. Successful people know the importance of persevering.

## Civic Virtue—Helping the Poor and Needy

When The Little Red Train plowed into the snow bank, all the Kinderfelds jumped off the train and went straight to work. Mr. Kinderfeld said, “Think about the poor people who need this food. We can’t let them down.”

“We’ll work hard,” said all the children. “We need to help those poor people.”

## Encouraging and Complimenting

The Little Red Train said to the helpers when it could move again, “You did a great job. Even though the work was hard, you never gave up. I’ll keep trying my best to reach the people on the mountain.”

The Little Red Train complimented the helpers for the hard work they did, and for not giving up. We should learn to encourage and compliment others when they do good things.

## Being Thankful

That night the mountain village had a big celebration. The town leaders thanked each helper and The Little Red Train for coming up the mountain. They gave each helper a gold medallion while the band played, “Try, Try, Try.”

We should learn to be thankful when people do good things for us.

## Questions

1. What did the people in the mountain do with the wood from the trees?  
*The people in the mountain used the wood from the trees to make pull toys, games, play blocks, and many other nice things for those living in the valley.*
2. What did one of the big trains say when he left the station?  
*When the big train left the station he said, “Only we can go up the steep mountain to bring food, clothing, and supplies to the people.”*
3. What did the people do when the big trains left the mountain?  
*When the big trains left the mountain the people would load their crafts onto the train to be sold to those in the valley below.*
4. What would the big trains boast to The Little Red Train whenever it pulled into the yard to be loaded up with fuel?  
*When The Little Red Train pulled into the yard the big trains would boast, “You’re just a little train that can travel only in the valley. Only we are strong enough to go up the steep mountain!”*
5. Why did the big trains look down on The Little Red Train?  
*The big trains looked down on The Little Red Train because they were proud.*

6. What did a big train say to another big train when the snow became so deep that it covered the fence posts?

*When the big train saw the snow so deep, he said to the other train, "We can't go up the mountain. We'll get stuck in the deep snow."*

7. What was happening to the food for the people living on the mountain?

*The people on the mountain were running out of food.*

8. What did the biggest train say when Mr. Wiggles told him, "If we don't get food, everyone will die!"

*When Mr. Wiggles told the biggest train the people would die if they did not get food, the train said, "Well, we're not going! It's much too dangerous."*

9. What did The Little Red Train say when a girl said to him, "If the people on the mountain don't get food, they will die"?

*When The Little Train heard that the people on the mountain would die without food, he said, "We can't let the people die. If the big trains won't go, I'll find some helpers, and we'll try to make it up the mountain."*

10. Why was The Little Red Train willing to go up the steep mountain?

*The Little Red Train was willing to go up the steep mountain because he had compassion for others.*

11. What did the big trains do and say when they heard that The Little Red Train wanted to go up the mountain?

*When the big trains heard that The Little Red Train wanted to go up the mountain, they roared with laughter and said, "You can't go up the mountain in that deep snow! You can't even make it up the mountain when there is no snow!"*

The big trains made fun of The Little Red Train. Sometimes we are made fun of and get persecuted because we want to do what is right. We should keep on doing what is right regardless of what others say.

12. What did The Little Red Train say when the big trains said, "If we can't climb the mountain in the deep snow, you surely can't"?

*When the big trains said to The Little Train that he could not climb the mountain if they could not, he said, "Someone must try to help the poor people. If no one else will go, then I will!"*

13. Out of the whole town, how many families were willing to help The Little Red Train go up the mountain?

*Only one family agreed to help The Little Red Train to go up the mountain—the Kinderfelds.*

14. What did the big trains do as The Little Red Train went puffing away with his cargo and his brave helpers?

*As The Little Red Train went puffing away with his cargo and his brave helpers the big trains hooted and tooted and laughed.*

15. What was the song The Little Red Train and the helpers sang?

*Try, try, try,  
We'll do our best and try.  
Mountains we will try to scale,  
Though it's hard and we may fail.  
Try, try, try,  
We'll do our best and try.  
We'll try!*

16. What is the theme of the song?

*The theme of the song is: Regardless of how difficult it gets, be determined to keep on trying.*

Regardless of how difficult it was, The Little Red Train and its helpers were determined to keep on trying. Successful people know the importance of persevering.

17. What appeared in front of The Little Red Train as it rounded a mountain curve?

*A giant wall of snow appeared in front of The Little Red Train when it rounded the mountain curve.*

18. What happened to The Little Red Train as it plowed straight into the snow bank?

*The Little Red Train screeched to a sudden stop when it plowed into the snow bank.*

19. What did Mrs. Kinderfeld say when The Little Red Train was stuck in the snow?

*When The Little Red Train was stuck in the snow, Mrs. Kinderfeld said, "Everyone get out your shovels. We're not giving up!"*

20. What did Mr. Kinderfeld say as they began to remove the snow from The Little Red Train?

*When they began to remove the snow from The Little Red Train, Mr. Kinderfeld said, "Think about the poor people who need this food. We can't let them down."*

21. What did all the children say when they heard their father say, "Think about the poor people who need this food. We can't let them down"?

*When the children heard about the poor people, they said, "We'll work hard. We need to help those poor people."*

22. Why were the children willing to work so hard?

*The children were willing to work hard because they had compassion for the*

*poor people on the mountain.*

23. What did The Little Red Train say to its helpers as it moved again?

*When The Little Red Train moved again he said, "You did a great job. Even though the work was hard, you never gave up. I'll keep trying my best to reach the people on the mountain."*

The Little Red Train complimented the helpers for the hard work they did and for not giving up. We should learn to encourage and compliment others when they do good things.

24. What did the mayor say to the people when they asked, "Why don't the big trains come"?

*When the people asked why the big trains don't come, the mayor said, "They can't. The snow is much too deep."*

25. What did the mayor say when the townspeople became excited and said to one another, "Could it be a train is coming"?

*When the people said they thought a train was coming, the mayor said, "It's impossible for any big train to climb the mountain in this deep snow. You must be hearing the wind."*

26. When The Little Red Train appeared, what did the children do?

*When the children saw The Little Red Train they threw their hands into the air and shouted, "Hooray for The Little Red Train! Hooray!"*

27. After The Little Red Train pulled into the station, what did the helpers do?

*When The Little Red Train pulled into the station the helpers climbed out and gave the food to the hungry people.*

28. What did the people and the children do when The Little Red Train pulled into the station?

*When The Little Red Train pulled into the station the people cried for joy and the children were so happy that they danced in the snow.*

29. What did the town leaders do?

*The town leaders thanked each helper and The Little Red Train for coming up the mountain. They gave each helper a gold medallion.*

We should learn to be thankful when people do good things for us.

30. What song did the band play as they gave each helper a medallion?

*The band played "Try, Try, Try" as they gave each helper a medallion.*

31. What did the mayor say to The Little Red Train?

*The mayor said to The Little Red Train, "Until now you have been called, 'The Little Red Train.' But because you never gave up, even when things*

*got hard, and since you have taught us all to try, try, try, we are giving you a new name.”*

32. What name was on the gold medallion that was given to The Little Red Train?

*The name on the gold medallion for The Little Red Train was: “The Triumphant Train.”*

33. From then on, whenever things got hard, what would the people everywhere sing?

*When things got hard, the people would sing the song of The Triumphant Train:*

*Try, try, try,*

*We’ll do our best and try.*

*Mountains we will try to scale,*

*Though it’s hard and we may fail.*

*Try, try, try,*

*We’ll do our best and try.*

*We’ll try!*