**Shot Clock of Life**

In sports, a shot clock is a countdown timer that shows how much time a player has left to shoot the ball. In life, we all have an imaginary shot clock that tells us like we’re running out of time and running out of chances. As we get old, that’s how we mostly feel.

Nowadays, where basketball courts were as common as fishball stands, I was just like any regular teenager. Every afternoon after school, even before I change uniform clothes, I was already at the court with my friends, dribbling and shooting until it gets dark. I know I wasn’t the star player. In fact, I wasn’t even the tallest in the group. But there was something about the game that made me feel alive—especially during tight games, when the *shot clock* was ticking down, and everyone had to move fast.

Our family didn’t have much to afford training camps or expensive gear. I know that if I wanted to chase my dream of playing basketball, maybe even in college someday, I had to make every second count. Right now, I know that I am too far still from being successful but I believe that each day, I am a step closer and a little bit better. For people like me who never stop doing what we love and never stop reaching our dreams, the shot clock of life gives us endless chances to try and try until our success stories finally turns into reality.

In sports, a shot clock is a countdown timer that shows how much time a player has left to shoot the ball. It adds pressure, urgency, and forces a decision—no room for hesitation. In life, we all have an imaginary shot clock too. It ticks silently, reminding us that time is passing, that chances come and go, and that as we grow older, it can often feel like we’re running out of time.

In today’s world—especially here in the Philippines, where basketball courts are as common as fishball stands—I was just like any other regular teenager. Every afternoon after school, even before I could change out of my uniform, I was already at the court with my friends. We’d play until the sky turned orange and the streetlights flickered on. I wasn’t the star player. In fact, I wasn’t even the tallest or the fastest. But something about basketball made me feel alive—especially during close games, when the shot clock was ticking and everyone had to act fast.

Our family didn’t have much. We couldn’t afford training camps, fancy basketball shoes, or private coaching. But I knew that if I wanted to chase my dream of playing for a real team—maybe even in college—I had to treat every moment like it mattered. Like I was always one possession away from making something happen.

Now, as a senior high school student, the pressure feels more real. Deadlines, decisions, and doubts constantly surround me. Everyone’s talking about the future—college, careers, responsibilities. Sometimes, it feels like I’m already behind, like the shot clock is almost out and I haven’t even made my move yet.

But then I remind myself: just like in basketball, it’s not always about being the best from the start. It’s about showing up. It’s about improving day by day. Right now, I know I’m still far from where I want to be, but every day I train, every lesson I learn, every challenge I face—it’s a step forward. A step closer to the dream.

The truth is, not everyone gets a perfect opportunity. But for people like me—those who never stop doing what they love, who keep chasing their goals even when it’s hard—the shot clock of life gives us more than just one chance. It gives us moments. And those moments, no matter how short, are enough to try again. To shoot again.

Someday, I hope my story turns into a real success story. But for now, I’ll keep playing. I’ll keep trying. Because I believe that if I make every second count, the buzzer won’t signal an end—it’ll signal that I took the shot.