SOLITUDE AND LEADERSHIP
How I learnt swimming

Learning something new can be a scary experience. One of the hardest things I've ever had to do was learn how to swim. I was always afraid of water, but I decided that swimming was an important skill that I should learn. I also thought that it would be a good exercise and help me become physically stronger. What I didn't realize was that learning to swim would also make me a more confident person.

New situations always me a bit nervous, and my first swimming lesson was no exception. After I changed into swimming shorts in the locker room, I stood timidly by the side of the pool waiting for the teacher and the other students to show up. After a couple of minutes the teacher came over. He smiled and introduced himself, and two more students joined us. Although they were both older than me, they didn't seem to be much embarrassed about not knowing how to swim. I began to feel more at ease.

We got into the pool, and the teacher had us put on fluorescent colored water arm band to help us stay afloat. One of the other students, had already taken the beginning class once before, so she took a kickboard and went splashing off by herself. The other student and I were told to hold on to the side of the side of the pool and shown how to kick for the breast stroke. One by one the teacher had us hold onto a kickboard while she pulled it through the water and we kicked. Pretty soon the other two were doing it by themselves, travelling fast across the short side of the swimming pool.

Things were not quite that easy for me, but the teacher was very patient. After a few more weeks, when I seemed to have caught up with my legs, he taught me the arm strokes. Now I had two things to pay attention to, my arms and my legs. I felt hopelessly uncoordinated. Sooner than I imagined, however, things began to feel right and I was able to swim. It was a wonderful free feeling- like flying, maybe- to be able to shoot across the water.

Learning to swim was definitely not easy for me, but in the end my persistence and hard work to achieve my goal paid off. Not only did I learn to swim and conquer my fear of water, but I also learnt something about learning and leadership. Now when I am faced with a new situation I am not so nervous. I may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but I know that as I practice being in that situation and as my skills get better, I will feel more and more comfortable. It is a wonderful, free feeling when you achieve a goal you have set for yourself.