**Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.**

My friend laughed as he found out that I’m gonna be playing in today’s match. “Can you even run? I bet you can’t even kick a ball. You’re gonna get shit on so hard!” These words build up to my growing reluctance in playing. I started getting those words to invade my thoughts. This is gonna be so embarrassing if I screw up terribly, which I was pretty sure I will. Being a starter, there’s only one sound I’m anticipating. The whistle. “Fweet!” The whistle finally blew and the game began.

Growing up, I have never done any athletic activities. I’ve always been someone who stays indoors or simply just observes my friends doing sports whenever I’m outside. Part of the reason why I’ve never gone beyond myself and try sports is because I know I’m bad at it and I’m terrified that others will judge me. In middle school, I was good at everything I did and I was scared to break this image of mine. I like others to see me as this perfect and strong girl who can do anything. Throughout my years in school, I have never shown any signs of what I define weak at that time. I’ve never stressed over problems or cried over things. I’ve never understood how someone can feel so miserable over something.

This carried on up until I moved schools. Then, I finally understood how some problems can greatly affect someone’s life. I lost a friend that is very dear to me over a conflict that is unsolvable. I have never cried this much in my life. After months of enduring the pain, I finally understood that these feelings are not signs of being weak. Being able to go through tremendous pain is what makes an individual strong. A new perspective regarding myself opened up and this sparked a feeling of curiosity within me. “What other wrong mindset do I need to change?”

I decided that I need to change my mindset of having this perfect, unbeatable image and embrace my weaknesses. Sports, being my greatest weakness, is where I explored first. After trying both tennis and golf several times, I don’t find them to be my cup of tea. Just when I was about to close the door from other new activities, an opportunity jumped right in front of me. My friend invited me to join the school’s girls’ soccer team. “I’ve never kicked a ball my entire life and I suck in sports. Like no joke.” I was really hesitant in contributing my athletic abilities in a team sport. I was scared that I would be the main reason we lose in future games. I was scared of all the insults saying that I can’t do it. I was scared to try. I then decided to try once or twice and see if I enjoy it or not. One session passed. Everyone in the team was very supportive and encouraging. This motivates me to always fight for the ball and not give up no matter how big or good the opponent seems. Being able to steal the ball from an opponent sparked a feeling within me. “Hey, maybe I’m not that bad,” I thought to myself.

Before I knew it, the ball approached me. I rushed forward to steal the ball from the opponent, fighting for my school. I felt the gushing air on my hair as I ran, then, I realized that changing my attitude, opening up myself to new activities and learning new things can lead to great opportunities. Being bad at something is not so terrible after all. With all the training and my fighting spirit, I was able to tremendously improve my skills until I was selected to be one of the players for a soccer tournament. I finally embodied the meaning of “you never know if you never try” instead of limiting my abilities. I changed my mindset and I ended up finding something within me that I never expected to have, sport abilities.

Hi Reissa,

Well done on your first draft! I thought you did quite well in narrating your moment of realization that lead to your change of mindset. I also applaud you for adding some sensory details to your essay, which made it interesting for me to continue reading.

However, I think you should take more time to explore how this change in mindset really impacted your life. How did you grow in other areas of life? What benefits have you seen from this mindset change? Please share more of the growth you’ve seen, which is really what the prompt is asking of you.

Here is what your essay should look like:

1. Hook: the match. Your friend undermining you, and you knowing that you can only do your best.
2. Setting the scene: never having done any sports or tried new things because of your fear of failure.
3. The turning point: having tried your best at saving a friendship and failed anyway. Realising that what’s important is that you tried. Generalising this to other areas of your life, namely sports.
4. The change: trying different sports, despite your fear of looking stupid. Turns out, your soccer teammates encourage you when you fail and try to help you improve instead of put you down!
5. The reflection: continuation of hook. Realising that failure is not when you can’t do something, it’s when you don’t try at all. How has this change in attitude affected you in other parts of your life? How will this impact the way you approach things at uni and in the future?

Best wishes,

Johana & Chiara