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

Ver 6

“Can you even run? I bet you can’t even kick a ball. You’re going to get crushed so hard!” My friend laughed as he found out that I was going to be playing in today’s match. These words echoed in my head as I prepared, the thought failing terrifying me.

“One! Two! Three! Tigers!”

Despite my initial anxiety, shouting these words with my team made me realize how hard I’d trained for with the rest of my team.

“Fweet!” The whistle below and the game began.

I’d always taken other people’s thoughts about me to heart. In middle school, I was good at everything and terrified to break that image. I avoided anything I thought I was bad at to prevent being judged.

This carried on while I moved schools. Then, I experienced what I thought was one of my greatest fears – losing a friendship. Being constantly rejected after multiple attempts to talk it out frustrated me, leaving me powerless. People told me to give up and move on, but my optimistic self still tried for a year. Through talks with my friends and even the Netflix shows I watched, I learned we do not have total control of everything in life. I grew to realize that what I really feared was losing my perfect image if I failed to control other people’s responses.

I decided that I needed to change my mindset and embrace defeat, and an opportunity sprang when my friend invited me to join the girls’ soccer team. I was scared of all the insults saying that I can’t do it. Yet, I agreed to a few practice sessions regardless.

One session passed. A simple compliment from the vice-captain made my stomach do a little flip. “You have potential! You just need to hone the techniques.” Excitement rushed through my veins as my teammates cheered for me every time I was able to steal a ball. Trying something new, I found, was not so terrible. This motivated me to give my best in training and matches, no matter how good the opponent seemed.

It was time for kick-off. My team’s striker passed the ball to me and I kicked it forward. Dashing towards the ball, I felt the gushing air on my hair and a thrill within me when I succeeded to do so. Although the match ended with a loss, I had won something much more: a new outlook on my potential. I finally didn’t let my fear of failure prevent me from exploring new things and discovering my abilities.

Since then, I have been taking up new and unfamiliar challenges, from attempting to solve an extreme question in a test where I would normally just skip, joining music and coding competitions, to initiating a conversation with new people. My definition of failure has now changed – it’s not about being incapable or bad at something; what matters is I try and give my best.

Hi Rebekah,

Thank you for your essay. You’ve got the meat of the story here – trying something new despite your inner voice and social conditioning led you to enrich your life. Your story can be strengthened if you elaborate on how your life changed after that (your last paragraph). Provide more examples along with how your perspective is contantly developing as you and you’ve got a holistic story.

C.G.