**Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it. (650 words)**

I remembered the first goal I didn’t save.

It started with this. “Can you sub in as a temporary keeper for Enli?” A senior asked.

I was mortified. With plenty of past experiences with sports, I visualized my journey ahead, due to my size, I never felt welcome in any sport. But somewhere deep down, I knew a little girl was beaming with excitement, and a chance to play with the infamous soccer team made it impossible to say “No.” So now I had two days, no prior keeper experience, what could go wrong?

The morning of the competition, I had a panic attack. The thought of being the reason my seniors lost their final cup had sent my whole body into shock. A billion “what ifs?” scrambled in my head, a million scenarios ended with me causing a humiliating loss.

What happened, however, was the opposite.

Throughout the games, a senior I barely even knew, continuously cheered for me in the sidelines, telling me to breathe. Knowing my lack of experience, the other players went the extra mile, showering me with encouraging smiles and bear hugs that washed away all the guilt I felt for all the goals I didn’t save.

Then it happened, the game that determined third place. The team captain did something unheard of. She decided that they’d won enough championships and fun was the imperative motive for this match, and after a sudden timeout, they went back on the court beaming with confidence, and I watched from the bench in awe.

It was a hilarious sight. The star striker playing in goal, the midfielders playing defence and the defenders running around trying to score a goal, not a hint of worry on that court. No competition, no pressure, just the inexplicable joy of playing soccer with old friends. We lost the match, but it didn’t matter. We had won in so many different ways.

That experience was my first taste of great leadership, my “I want to be them.” Young and naive, I never thought anyone would ever see me as a leader, but the world listens. Low and behold, years later, I was given the opportunity to be the President for the school’s Leo Club. With no prior formal leadership experience, and very big shoes to fill, the tumultuous journey began.

The first weeks were filled with one-word responses and unanswered text messages. I remember my frustration and constant doubt towards myself. Constantly wondering “Why don’t they listen?” At the height of my frustration, I was revisiting different motivational methods for an upcoming business test, then it hit me: Different people thrives under different environments.

Which once again pushed me to reflect on how I’ve been approaching my team, how I approached them expecting immediate synergy when I barely knew anything about them

With newfound confidence, I reminded myself that good things take time.

I had always been an extrovert, and it's surprising what very little information can do. I could accommodate the needs of their personalities without exhausting myself, by just identifying whether they were private or outgoing people. Communication and delegation become much easier. Though it wasn’t immediate smooth sailing, the collective stress the team went through planning the inauguration molded our group of individuals into a fully functioning team. We had overcome our first hurdle.

This whole experience reminded me of the infamous Spiderman saying, “With great power, comes great responsibility.” Cliche, but incredibly relatable. Though I felt the necessity to be their friend, there was a common goal that needed to be met. There were situations when I had to be firm and remind the team of their responsibilities, times where I had to give harsh evaluations after events, and even threaten to remove members who weren’t pulling their weight. I jumped dimensions out of my comfort zone, from being on the sidelines to the centre of the field. Being president taught me empathy, patience and courage like no other. To understand the emotions of others and cater to everyone’s needs to add that little bit of motivation that elevated our work to a whole different level, to giving and receiving criticism that would have destroyed me in the past. Instead, it left me hungry for more, to be a better leader, build a better team, to start small and bloom into something beyond my imagination. I want more.

The rest of the year only bonded the team even more. Meetings that were strictly organisational work became three hour long sharing sessions, where we talked about life and everything in between. What we did didn’t feel like much, but we came to school pleasantly surprised as we saw an “**Outstanding Award for the year 2021-2022**” trophy on display in the teacher’s room. A little glass trophy that reminded me of the first goal I didn’t save.