**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 of screwing up terribly scared me.

“One! Two! Three! Tigers!”

Despite my initial anxiety, shouting these words as a team made me realize how hard I’d trained for this match with the rest of my team. All I could do then was give my best. “Fweet!” The whistle below and the game finally began.

Growing up, I’d always taken other people’s thoughts about me into account. In middle school, I was good at everything I did and I was terrified to break this image of mine. I avoided anything I knew I was bad at to prevent being judged.

This carried on up until I moved schools. Then, I experienced what I thought was one of my greatest fears – losing a friendship. I was in a conflict with one of my friends, which caused us to avoid each other. Being constantly rejected after trying to talk it out made me frustrated as I’m unable to control the outcome. I’ve tried everything, from initiating a text to asking my friends to help set up a hangout. Lots of people told me to give up and move on, but my optimistic self still tried even a year after the dispute. Through deep-talks with my friends, even in the Netflix shows that I watched, I learned that we might not have total control of everything in life. I grew to realize that what I really feared was losing my perfect image by failing to control other people’s response. This mixture of reasons caused me to learn to let go and understand that it’s okay to admit failure.

I decided that I needed to change my mindset of having this perfect image and embrace defeat. Sports, being my greatest weakness, was one thing I tried to approach differently. An opportunity sprang when my friend invited me to join the girls’ soccer team. I was really hesitant to contribute my athletic abilities in a team sport. I was scared of all the insults saying that I can’t do it. Yet, realizing my new understanding, I agreed to a few practice sessions regardless of knowing that there’s still a possibility to fail.

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.” Everyone else in the team was very supportive and encouraging as well. Excitement rushed through my veins as my teammates cheered for me every time I was able to steal a ball during training. Apparently, trying something new – especially that I fear of – was not so terrible. This motivated me to give my best in training and matches, no matter how big or 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 terrible loss, I had won something much more, a new view on what I could do. I finally don’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.