**Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.**

NO! There is so much power in a two-lettered word. It is a word that many fear. It’s the cause of despair. A lover’s greatest fear when confessing. A prospective student’s greatest fear when applying. And, a daughter’s greatest fear as she’s about to go out.

As a first-born daughter in an Asian family, I experienced all the bitter sides of my parents. Everything I owned was hardly earned through the As found in my report card and the awards I received at the end of the academic year. Even a simple hangout with friends on a weekend is something that is hardly earned. “Enough! No is a no, stop asking why.” Inferring from her tone and diction, it seems impossible to persuade my mom. Maybe, if I appealed to my mom differently, she would let me. I put on my thinking cap and the wheel of creativity started running across my mind. I started thinking of ways to solve this enigmatic problem.

First, scan, set the mood, then negotiate. Three simple steps I learned from the TV series Suits. However, applying it is not as easy as it seems. I attempted to entertain my mom by either telling her funny stories of my friends at school or being attentive of her needs because humor and attention is what she likes. The moment she said yes I was thrilled. Eventually, the habit of looking for new and innovative ways to persuade my mom trained my creativity, especially in influencing and bargaining.

This skill expanded to other aspects of my life. On UN Day, me and 4 other friends were in-charge of selling Ghana food to fundraise for xx charity. Lots of people visited our booths just because Ghana food sounds interesting, but apparently not interesting enough for them to try. Nobody bought our food or drink, they all rather bought waffles from the Belgium food stand across ours.

It was 37º Celsius and I saw people carrying only heaps of food. I decided to approach them differently. “Ms, I see a lot of food but no drink. Are you sure you don’t wanna try our special drink, Bissap Sobolo, for only IDR10,000?” Realizing I was right, they stopped to buy our drinks. More and more people started coming to our stand to try our “unique, refreshing, and special drink” the way I market it. Seeing that my hands are working non-stop to serve people drinks, I persuaded them to buy our snacks as well.

Not long after that, our stand was empty. We’re sold out! The whole Ghana team was delighted in our success. “You were so convincing earlier. We wouldn’t have done it without your cleverness!” We ended up gathering IDRxxxx and donating all of it to xxxx. My weekly persuading training ended up making a great impact for xxx.

**Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?**

The child-like side of me shines as I was walking in the kids’ section of Zara. Who knows being just 15 cm shorter than the average height feels like I’m living in a different dimension. Looking straight at people’s shoulders instead of their heads, having the fear of getting stepped on during concerts, being called tiny and worst of all–being looked down both literally and figuratively.

Seventh grade was when it all started. Feels like all my friends turned into skyscrapers overnight. “Bek, why are you so short now?” my friend, Jonathan said while rubbing my head. At first it was merely a physical joke which I found funny. However, over the course of time, the taller my friends grew, the more they looked down on me. “Shut up, Bek! You’re literally a midget.” Height-related insults were often thrown at me as I gave my opinion or insights in a discussion among my friends. At times, even when I know I’m right, they would just disregard my statements and continue talking. One time, my friends didn’t bother listening to me when I corrected their viewpoints on public and private highschools in Jakarta. However, when my other friend expressed the same opinion that I had, they were much more understanding and they were willing to change their minds. Things like this happened multiple times to the point it made me feel small and insignificant.

The things I say are not the only ones that were made fun of. Whenever I wanted to try out new things such as sports, a condescending insult about my height would sprang out. I wasn’t confident enough to try new sports. Badminton? The net is for sure taller than me. Basketball? Opponents can easily block me. Golf? The clubs are more than half my height. In their eyes, I was a dwarf who can’t do anything.

Eventually, being shut out and made fun of every time I do anything made me sick. I was done with all the insults, I wanted to instill my presence and my capabilities. I wanted to show them that I can do big things. Utilizing my strengths academically and non-academically, I decided to join the strings’ orchestra in my school. Being selected to perform in various recitals and concerts boosts my self-confidence and the ability to express myself through music. I didn’t just flourish in arts, my determination to prove my worth made me a rising star in STEM subjects as well. I jumped with joy as soon as I got a best student award in robotics class meaning that I finally beat the computer-geek. Since then, I realized that I am able to do big things despite my small body.

The efforts made in getting first rank in my 7th grade class started out to prove my worth and my ability. As time passes by, I realized that being small doesn’t mean that I can’t do big things. Receiving a predicted IB40 and winning various competitions made me overcome the physical psychology barrier within me. Although I haven’t fully embraced the disadvantages of my physical features, I’m glad where it has brought me today. I now know that despite being 150 cm, I still can reach for the moon.