Obstacles and Support

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Abstract

Finding those defining moments in one’s life can be difficult. For many of us the challenge lies in identifying the key events. Events can be large or small and have varying effects making them difficult to identify. Victims of tragedy who live with disabilities will recall that fateful day when their world got turned upside down with, perhaps painful, clarity. Those events will alter the course of a person’s life and often the lives of those closest to them without question. Whether it is physical or mental damage inflicted by an accident, the effects will often be present for the duration of a lifetime. Tragic events often sound and truly can be damaging to the outcome of a person’s life but this is not always the case. When facing the challenges presented by such an event, one finds that many who suffer find themselves growing stronger in areas they never would have imagined. Overcoming new obstacles while experiencing support from others helps to make a victim into who they become.

Overcoming Obstacles

Many people live with the effects of a tragedy for the duration of their lives. In her book Wendelin Van Draanen constructs a sixteen year old girl who experiences a tragic bus accident and loses a leg. Jessica (the main protagonist) is a track runner who believes that running is “the breath of life”. When she loses her leg the character is faced with new obstacles in the both mental and physical form. She is supported by people around her in a heartwarming fashion and even though this is helpful to her, she must still overcome depression and bitterness. In considering this book two main critical issues come to the surface. The first of these issues is obstacles, Jessica experiences these both internally and externally and the second is Support from both her parents and most importantly her friends and team.

Mental challenges are often unseen and can be very difficult to overcome. For Jessica they are perhaps the hardest and most surprising to her. Jessica experiences mental challenges in much the same way that

The second form of obstacles she faces is External. Her loss of leg is a crucial part of Jessica’s past running life and when her leg is lost she finds herself faced with the inability to run for a time.

One of the main ways in which Jessica receives support is from her parents.

Her team is perhaps the more important form of support she experiences

Book: the running dream Wendelin Van Draanen

Issues: Obstacles and support

Major obstacles: she loses her leg and even though her family is doing their best to support her she still feels abandoned and alone

Second medication obstacles. She tries to get off the pain medication she was given for her leg but struggles with this aswell

Support: her best friend, Fiona helps to get her out of her depression

External obstacles

“Disabilities and special needs are lived realities that change the lifestyles forever of all those who are involved “ (Persiani-Becker, 2011).

“Quality multicultural children’s literature that presents characters with disabilities in a positive way failing to communicate the idea of diversity as a more complex and multifaceted concept” (Causarano, 2012, p.9).

Internal obstacles

“all characters share universal experiences such as embarrassing moments, goals, challenges, and accomplishments, no matter if one is able bodied or not, healthy or not, learning disabled or not” (Persiani-Becker, 2011).

Erb (2007) discusses the necessity for looking beyond our narrow cultural and personal boundaries in order to reflect on who we are and what our relation is to others. (as cited in Causarano, 2012, p.5).

Family Support

“Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society” (