## ESSAY

**The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?**

A pair of aged beige curtains attempted to block the sunlight from creeping in. The sterility of the room overwhelmed my senses, forcing me to confront my discomfort. As the coldness of the gel coated my torso, I watched the doctor whisper to the nurse as they called my mom. I listened to my heart throbbing against the cage of my chest, synchronizing with the ticking of the wall clock, counting my life away. Dazed and confused, I sat with my mom next to me. “Your daughter has an ovarian tumor”.

It felt my life change the moment I walked out of those doors.

The next few months were filled with fear and uncertainty. After my surgery I felt that nothing could ever be the same again. Doctor visits, stomach cramps and medication became my routine. Mundane tasks like walking to the bathroom became a privilege. I felt like a liability, unable to fill my days doing the things I love most. I could neither exercise nor spend my Sunday afternoons baking in the kitchen. I felt as though everything I knew was taken away. Every day I felt like I was carrying sorrow in my heart. A sorrow I had to mask behind a smile because I couldn’t stand watching people pity me.

I was adamant not to victimize myself, especially in front of my parents. Determined not to worry them, I resorted to constant prayers and meditation as way to cope. I imagined all the milestones in my life to look forward to: going to Bali with my friends after graduation, drinking hot chocolate at the Christmas markets in Europe, getting my first apartment. There were so many moments ahead of me which became a source of inspiration. I began to see the bigger picture, realizing that this challenge is what will make me stronger. My trial became my fuel: determined to work towards moments of triumph and success yet to come.

Hence, inspiring me to strive towards my greatest dreams. One of them being to start a business. I decided to invest my time and savings into growing “Ourdrobe”, an online fashion marketplace. I always saw fashion as something more than aesthetics so I was determined to share how much happiness and value this can bring to people. Receiving new clothes in the mail and playing dress up in my mom’s closet were always something that brought me a rush of excitement, a feeling I wanted to spread through this app. Building this business became something which kept my mind away from the negativity by sharing something I love with the world.

Seeing the finished logo, the first instagram posts and each partnership we made sparked more and more hope and determination. Each progress made brought it with more and more fuel to keep me going through the difficult times. Each time I was nervous before a doctors appointment, I distracted myself by creating more social media content. Whenever I felt pain which I couldn’t handle, I imagined Ourdrobe advertisements on bus stations to distract myself. As a secondhand marketplace, Ourdrobe highlights the value of old clothes, to give them new life and new meaning. Reminding me that everything deserves a second chance, including myself. It kept my faith up.

Though physically gone, my tumor left a long-lasting impression on me mentally. Overcoming all the fear and pain for what felt like an eternity taught me that every adversity contains within it the seeds of opportunity and growth. I now understand how the extent of pain which life can throw on me which engineered me to have a stronger mentality. I have evolved, now ready to face any challenges awaiting me in the next chapter of my life.