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Hard Work and Determination

As I slid down the mountain face first with my board dragging behind me, all I wanted to do was give up. I knew how to ski, so I assumed that it would be just as easy to pick up snowboarding. I had barely learned anything and had spent more time on the ground than standing. That day we hardly walked up the bunny hill. I would walk up, struggle to stand and as soon as I got up, the board would magically slide out underneath me and I would be back on my butt sliding down the hill again. For the next lesson, many people had dropped out and given up, but I was determined to keep going. If I think about that day of snowboarding in a different light, it was actually an accomplishment. Before the lesson, I didn’t even know how to step myself into the board, and now I could stand up. After a few more lessons, I slowly began to turn and even ventured up the whole magic carpet! Every time I tried I would just get a little bit better and fall down one less time.

This “no quit” mentality has been a part of me ever since I was little. In first grade, I was diagnosed with Dyslexia. While everyone was learning to read, I was still struggling with my letters. From then on at school, I was always one step behind everyone else. I hated being “different”, but I worked really hard to improve. I got a tutor that helped me with letters and sounds, and pretty soon my hard work paid off and I started to catch up with the rest of the class. While most people think of elementary school as the easy years where you get good grades with little to no effort, it was the opposite for me. School has always been something I had to work at, but I learned that with hard work and determination I can succeed.

This determination to succeed paid off the winter I learned to snowboard. All my hard work and time came down to one challenge I set for myself. I told myself that by the end of the winter I would go down a black diamond. One crisp morning I decided to do just that. I looked calm but my mind was screaming as I took my fist turn down the mountain. I could see the small bunny hill below me and could watch all the kids tripping over their boards struggling to stand up like I had done just months earlier. With each turn I was gaining momentum; the icy white snow beneath my board rushed past me as I zoomed by. I was flying down the mountain and could see the bottom getting closer and closer. I couldn’t believe I was doing this. It felt like I was flying. My heart was racing and I could feel the smile stretching across my face. The cool air crashed into me, filling my lungs with its freezing numbness. Then my board began to slow down as the steep slope began to plateau off. I had reached the bottom. My hard work had paid off, and I had survived the black diamond.

I knew from the beginning that I would have to work harder to be as good as everyone else. I knew I was going to have to work hard to keep motivated to learn. If I kept trying and put in the effort, I would improve. While others quit because they were not the best at the beginning, dyslexia taught me to keep trying and my effort will pay off. I have accomplished things that I never would have thought possible in my first challenging years with dyslexia. These challenges have given me the mindset to try more difficult things that I may not have tried otherwise. Though the pressure does get to me at times, dyslexia helps me more than it hurts me. It helps me push myself in sports as well as school. Dyslexia is the reason why I can try new things without being afraid of failure. It gave me the strength to proceed and keep my head high even when my back side was sliding down the slopes. Good last line!

Overall, I think the topic of determination is a good one. I like the example of the snowboarding and of your honest assessment of you dyslexia. That said, this essay feels like it’s more about the snowboarding than about your determination. You are over the suggested word count, so you will need to cut out a lot, and I suggested one obvious place. I would fill in the rest with other aspects of your life where your determination has paid off. One example is great, but two or three shows a pattern and thus the reader believes this is an inherent character trait you have. If you can show other ways in which your dyslexia and following determined spirit have helped you succeed, this will be an even stronger essay.