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My grandfather is the person who I admire most: He is the epitome of stoicism. He grew up privileged and content; his family owned a large and wealthy factory. *Throughout World War II, however,* he lost everything. The factory was permanently nationalized, and his entire family *had been* shipped to concentration camps and killed. *My grandfather did not want* to let his past define him. He decided he’d study to become an engineer in Germany. This is where he met my grandmother and they immigrated to Canada. He very rarely talked *with anyone openly* about what happened during the war. He never once complained - *and this easily made me see him as a role model.*

He was easily the biggest influence on my **presenting self**. I wanted to be admired by my resilience to adversity and by my ability to work hard *and persistently. In order to position myself as the leader in* ***an individualistic culture****,* I’d constantly compare myself to my peer group to make sure that I was showing less emotion than them and working to the best of my ability. *I believed without a shadow of a doubt that if I was perceived as stoic and unyielding to the constraints around me, I’d be a suitable mentor, and lead by example.* *I thought that showing less emotion would increase my perceived reliability, and I feared disappointing people and letting them down. Following the same stoicism that once inspired me,* my peers began to praise my reliability. *This was extremely dangerous as it was clear I had started a vicious cycle - showing less acknowledgement to my own emotional struggles meant more praise from the people around me. This is where* ***reflected appraisal*** *played a part - in order for me to realize* *my value, I needed to be someone of value to others. This meant that if the people around me saw me as the leader I knew I could be, I would be able to firmly say that I was one. Although this meant I had been sorely neglecting myself and my own struggles during this time.* This lack of **self-compassion** is evident during my training period for cross country, *where after running so heavily I developed shin splints*. My coach had told me I needed to take a break because of the *physical toll I had put on my body.* Despite what he had said, I refused to let my team down, so I ran through it and kept training until I broke my leg. The next season*, the vicious cycle continued - I expressed my emotions minimally, I pushed myself past every breaking point, and sorely lacked any empathy with myself. I* broke my leg again, after getting shin splints.

This **face** I developed ended up strengthening itself, as showing no emotion would cause me to get more work from the people around me, which caused me to show even less **self-compassion.** Almost everything I did was related to that **face,** the stoicism**,** it became my **self concept.** *Looking back since then, I learned to have more self compassion. I am still learning that this is not the way - to neglect my own emotions for the sake of others’ praise or approval. This is a difficult lesson to unlearn and relearn effectively.*