

Story of Resilience: An Illustration

In grade 5, I was a shy girl who always felt as if the eyes of the entire school were on me. I was chubby and uncoordinated. Despite loving and wanting to play sports, I never had the courage to ask our sports teacher to join in any competition.

Sitting on bleachers of the school gym, I watched my friends running, sprinting, and jumping and I did all of these - by imagining.

My best friend, Sabrina, was one of the best sprinters and was on the school's relay team. I cheered for her; at times, I envied her and at times I felt somewhat jealous. Although Sabrina was a good person, she never made me feel bad.

At our annual interschool athletic competition, Sabrina asked me to come with her, as I was supposed to spend the evening at her home to complete our social science project. Just before the final relay race, one of our athletes pulled her muscle and couldn't participate any further. Sabrina came to me and gently asked if I could replace her. I said, "no way, I cannot run. . . our team will lose the race due to me." Sabrina said, "but if you don't participate, we will not be able to even compete in the final." Our athletics coach also urged me to join the team, although I could clearly see he wasn't convinced that I should or even could run.

I felt coerced to compete for the sake of the school, but I agreed reluctantly. I joined the team on the track field and I was to run first. At the whistle, it took me a while to realize that my competitors had moved on. "Run." Once I put one foot in front of the other, repeating this became easier and easier. I felt lighter and strangely I did not care who was watching . . .in fact, for the first time, I felt I wasn't watching myself. I felt lighter and some strange thing pushed me to run faster and faster. I was not the first to the exchange point but certainly not the last one. Little did I realize that the next runner had taken the baton . . . our team finished second. I was not the best runner that day, but that was the best I ever ran.

Reflection & Discussion

After writing your personal story of resilience, reflect on and answer the following questions.

1. How does this story represent the specific aspects of resilience discussed earlier?

2. What helped you deal with this challenge?

3. Are others aware of this story in the way that you recalled and wrote it here? If not, what might happen if they are made aware of your story?
