

EMPTY JOHN

“Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough.” – Oprah Winfrey

There once was a boy named John, who lived in an old and small red cabin up the hill with little to no neighbours around. John was a skinny and weak but determined child. Whenever he goes to his high school, he’ll always envy those who played sports like soccer and basketball. While watching them at the side-line, he thought to himself, “Wow, those people sure are energetic, they’re so strong and fit, I wonder how it’s like to be that tough, life must be easy for them.” As he wondered about his hypothetical life, he started to analyse the fast and elegant movements of the players. Day by day he would analyse and see how they did it, how they threw the ball and how they shot for the goal, and all the time he was fascinated by how good they were.

Until one day, after being envious of the players for so long, John decided to join them. He wanted to climb up the ranks and be just as good if not better than the other players. First, John went to the soccer team and tried his hands on the ball. Of course, it didn’t end well at first, John couldn’t even kick to pass the ball onto the other players. John wasn’t even qualified to partake in the high school competition, he just wasn’t up to par. People even started to doubt John. The team, the coach and even his parents were trying to convince him to find another hobby, one could even say even John was starting to believe in their doubts.

Until one day during practice, John landed a straight hard goal. At that moment no one was really cheering for John as landing a goal was not enough for him to compete, but for John, it was the first major sign of improvement. John became even more determined and more obsessed with soccer. He started training in his own free time, day and night, he would be spending time practicing his kicks and coordination. Until finally, the coach recognised his skills and allowed him to compete in the high school competition. He managed to win a gold medal for his team. All the people who once doubted John was cheering for him. He had accomplished what he desired, to be on par or better than the players. John had never felt so alive at that moment.

After a few months, however, John returned back to his normal mood. He was good at soccer but there was nothing left to improve. So, he looked upon the basketball team, thinking “If I could

become good at soccer, I bet I could become good at basketball too". So, he left the soccer team and joined the basketball club with the same amount of determination he once had for soccer. At first, of course, he couldn't catch up to the rest of the team but he knew he was improving. He was attentive regarding his progress and that's what kept him determined and eager. The coach for the basketball club could see it, he saw the fire in John's eyes and offered to help with practice. Not long after that, he was qualified to compete and proceeded to win yet another gold for the club. He had accomplished what he desired, to be just as good if not better than the players. John had never felt so alive at that moment

However, after a few weeks, John had once again lost his determination in the sport. He could still play and score but for him, it wasn't the same. It was getting boring for him, so he started looking for another hobby. However, his search was interrupted when the exam results came in and he realised how poorly he had performed. What's even worse is that John noticed his younger brother was doing better than him academically, which made John really envious. John hadn't felt envy for quite a while, and John hated it. His eyes began to be filled with determination once more. He was determined to become better academically, to become as good if not better than the top. So, there he went, began cutting out distractions and studied as hard as he could, filled with determination. After a year, he pulled through and became one of the top students of his school. He won multiple academic competitions and was seen as an example of a hard-working student, even having scholarships for colleges. He had accomplished what he desired, to be as good if not better than the top. John had never felt so alive.

However, after a few days, John once again felt...bored. He returned to his home after his high school graduation and laid in his bed. He did it, he maintained his position until graduation. Yet there was nothing in his eyes, no fire, no...determination. At that very moment, John could hear the chirping of the birds, the blowing of the wind and the rustling of the grass through his window. His mind finally slowed down and he began to look around himself. It was then he realised, he didn't have any long-lasting friends to talk to. He realised that other than his family he was quite...alone. He couldn't go back to his soccer team, he abandoned them. He couldn't go back to his basketball club either, he left without even looking back. He couldn't go back to his school, because he was so caught up with studies that he never made any connections. The thought of being alone disturbed him, for the first time in his life he felt...empty...until he saw a crack on the wall in his room, and started looking around his room and realised how poor the family was.

And so, he began, going to a college with the scholarship he earned with the determination to become rich, as rich if not richer than the top. He believed he will accomplish what he desired...because maybe then he could feel alive again.