

Try And Be Happy

Angry and dark clouds hung low over the small city of Quincy, Illinois. Although the weather was gloomy, my attitude was clear, bright, and sunny. Audrey and I were playing one-on-one soccer. I stole the ball, turned, and BAM- I fired the ball into the goal. Behind me Audrey said, "You're really good Jamie." Then under her breath she whispered, "I stink." I glance over at her and wish she would be happy with her best. My cousin Audrey's best is great, but she still struggles to be proud of her efforts. In everyone's life they feel the same thing Audrey did; failure and envy.

At sometime or another each person feels everyone is better than they are. I believe, no matter what, people should try their hardest and be happy with it.

I learned to be happy with my best efforts at the beginning of my seventh grade year. I sat in anticipation as the teacher passed out the graded tests. When I saw my score, my heart sank as I stared at the bold red letter. I had earned a B. Since kindergarten, I have only ever received A's. For the next couple days, I dwelled on that stupid little letter. I decided to talk to my dad about it. My dad asked, "Did you try? Do you now understand the information?" I thought about what he said and realized, in the long run, knowing the material was more important than the grade.

At one time or another, everyone does worse than they expected, whether it is at work, in school, or at sports. But not everyone learns from those moments. Just the simple action of realizing you should be happy with the result of your best efforts can change your outlook on life.

My karate teacher once said, "Without trying, you will never get anywhere in life. But if you fail while trying, at least you have learned what you need to work on." I never truly understood what he meant until a summer day in 2011 when I was practicing karate. My dad was filming me perform a kata, a pattern of punches and kicks. Throughout the kata I tried my best; I made sure every move I did had correct form. As I watched the video, I huffed, "I'm horrible at karate." My dad gazed over at me and said, "You haven't done karate in weeks, and it takes time and effort to improve." It was at that moment I realized the true meaning of what my sensei said about working hard, being happy with my progress, and not comparing myself to others.

Nowadays, more and more people feel like they have to be perfect. Some kids get stressed out even if just one person does better than them. High schoolers drop out of advanced classes because they think they aren't good enough. Adults envy the objects that other people have. I believe people, no matter what their age, should be

happy with their best. But on the other hand, some kids, even if they are really smart, don't try at all. Adults slack off because they don't think anyone will notice their mistakes. Why does everything have to be a competition? Why can't you just try your hardest and be happy with it?

I hope when Audrey gets older she will come to understand, as I did, it is okay if you aren't perfect, and you should be content with your best efforts. It is an important lesson I learned in my life, and I believe it is worthwhile for everyone to understand this concept. If people don't realize their best is good enough they will never be happy with their achievements. By being confident in themselves, people will be more positive, happy, and healthy.

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