

Current Character Strength Stories:

Putting together the EQ Schools Conference - Organizing the venue, the speakers, the promotional material, etc...

Speaking to adults about following their hearts, being in their power - at conferences and at MERIT

Past Strength Story:

When I was in middle school, I went to a private Jewish School in Belgium with kids from very well to do families. I had many friends and felt great socially. One day a kid named Vladleem showed up in our school. He didn't speak the language - not Hebrew, not French, not English. Every time in recess he would sit by himself and no one wanted to talk to him. He wore the same clothes everyday, and seemed poor and pretty unhappy. Every time I saw him by himself it bothered me. One day I decided to buy an extra can of coca-cola and offered it to him. I remember his shock and then delight when I approached him. I still remember his smile. And then we started to talk in the few little words that he knew in Hebrew and French. In the first meeting, I told him about some of my friends and gave him their names, after a while we got closer and talked about sports, teachers we liked and didn't, girls, and our families. I learned that Vladleem fled Minsk in Russia because he was persecuted and beaten up for being Jewish. I learned that his father beat him up at home and that his mother had two jobs just for them to be able to survive, and that he had to work as well. I also learned that I was his first true friend and that in a way, me coming his way, really saved him for getting into a serious cycle of depression. I lost touch with him by now but last I checked with him we was doing well, living in Brussels and enjoying life.

Current struggle:

I struggle with feeling inadequate about not making enough money for my family to live very comfortably. I often compare myself to my friends who make more money than I do and who's children have more opportunity because of that. The inner critic is telling me - "you can't make more money because you don't know how to do it and you don't have anything to offer to the world that is of value so of course people are not going to pay you for your services." It says: "And how in world did you make the decision to have 2 kids and buy a house - aren't you ashamed of yourself for overextending yourself and not being able to adequately support your wife and children?" And while I know that all of this isn't actually true, it feels sometimes very true.

Past struggles:

Feeling "less than" people who have jobs in the high tech industry, in companies like Google, and Facebook. Feeling like they are smarter than me for some reason and that I don't have what it takes to be successful anywhere else but in teaching.

Student Story - "Habib, you saved my life".

Being there for Eli when he was tough to deal with and just listening to his needs and eventually him breaking down down and me listening to him getting better.

Speaking at the funeral of a student of mine

Going to visit one of my students at the hospital after he tried to commit suicide

Writing a letter to representative to help my brother get a green card.

Presenting about Creativity and Happiness at the KCI.