

My Personal Essay

Battle of Ambivalence

I stared blankly at my dance teacher when she looked at me in vexation. I could see the clear expression of anger in her eyes. It was the day before my dance performance and she was upset with me because I forgot a dance step. I felt like I was going to start crying. I asked myself, how could you forget something so simple? However, I knew why, it was the day before the performance and this was the final practice, I was really nervous. I've had stage fright for my whole life, and I'd have to go through the same feeling of panic, apprehension, and insecurity every single year when I had to perform. My whole life I had been that one kid that would do her best to isolate herself from people, and I was the girl who never had confidence in herself. Hopefully I get over my stage fright this year.

After my group was done performing in front of all the parents, I ran to the bathroom and I started sobbing. I kept telling everyone who asked me why I was crying that my eyes were burning. I hated the fact that I had to perform every single year. I hated the fact that I made a mistake during the final practice, but what frustrated me the most is that this is happening in spite of my burning passion for dance. I was always the type of person to be very meticulous when it comes to dance. I aspired and dreamed that I could become a confident dancer. It was a battle of ambivalence every year when I had to perform. No one else was telling me that I couldn't do it other than me. I was my own menace, and sometimes it felt like I was against my own self unconsciously. Five minutes later, or what felt like an eternity my mom came into the bathroom and she looked at me in fury, however I could see her facial expression change when she looked at me and figured my vulnerable state of mind. My mom could read me like the palm of her hand. To her my feelings were transparent. Even when I looked fine, my mother knows when I'm hurting. My mom then asked, "What happened out there?" I replied by saying,

"I'm sorry, I was nervous, and I wanted to make sure every movement was perfect." I said anxiously. She then started ranting,

"Sweetheart, these are some of the few moments in your life when you are the most exhilaratingly alive. You don't actually experience what life is about until you are put in this type of situations. Listen, I know it's hard to believe, but you will one day gain your confidence, and you'll be able to understand why I told you this." She said calmly. I looked at my mother like she was crazy but her compassionate expressions and her calm voice calmed me down from my anxious state of mind.

Once I got home I started watching the recording of the dance over and over again to make sure that I wouldn't forget the steps tomorrow. I started practicing the dance until I felt like I was going crazy. I knew all of the dance steps by heart, but I still couldn't convince myself that

I will do fine tomorrow. I have been dancing for four years now. Why can't I have confidence in myself or what I'm doing? My mom came into the room while I was practicing the dance. She then said, "Once you have worked hard, don't worry about the result. Be satisfied with the fact that you worked hard, and do your best," she said phlegmatically.

"Thank you for the advice, I know that I can be a handful at times, but you are the best mom anyone could ever have." I said with lots of gratitude. "One day I will be so confident I will be on top of Mount Everest." I said lightheartedly. I wasn't oblivious to the fact that what I just said was cliché, but I didn't care. The only thing I cared about was when I said that, my mom looked proud of me for realizing that one day I can become confident and invincible.

The next day my heart was pounding so hard and loud that I could hear it very clearly. I felt lightheaded and dizzy, and I felt like I was going to pass out. I felt like I was in a line to go on a rollercoaster; however there was no turning back. Usually, when I'm at an amusement park,

I'd get in the line to go on a rollercoaster. Then, once I see all of the screaming people on the ride, I'd decide last minute that I didn't want to go on the ride. So far, the car ride to the theater was monotonous. I was wearing a light blue costume with silver necklace and earrings. Once we were halfway there, my mom started encouraging me and tried to lift my self confidence. However, I wasn't talking much. I was in a deep state of contemplation and I thought that she was probably as nervous as I was. She was probably worried that I would get nervous and make mistakes during performance like I did yesterday. I looked at my mom curiously, she looked back at me with a huge smile on her face, yet I studied her face for a minute. Then I looked down dumbfounded. Suddenly, I felt an air of melancholy surround me, and it was then I felt as if I was going to drown in my own sorrows. Suddenly, I had hit that hard-hitting realization that being unconfident is contagious; the other person might feel unconfident about you if you don't show confidence in yourself. Once my mom and I got out of the car, I was rushed into the dressing room to touch-up my makeup. I tried to put on this mask of confidence, a facade, to convince my mom that I can handle this, and that I can get over this. The dressing room was packed, and the atmosphere in the room overall felt chaotic. People were rushing to put on makeup,

and getting to where they needed to go fast.

A few minutes later, it was time to get inside the theater and watch the performances. I quickly glanced over at the pamphlet that showed who will be performing and when. I was act number two. I almost felt like I was going to have another panic attack. I didn't want to be one of the first performers; I wanted to be one of the last assuming that towards the end nobody cares much. On the bright side, at least I'd get the dance over with. After the first group was done performing I looked at them in awe, they performed so well and made it look so easy. That's it! All I have to do is make it look easy. I worked as hard as everyone else, so I should just dance and not worry about the result. It was now that my emotions made a one-hundred and eighty degree turn from being nervous to confident. Right now, I was backstage, and I suddenly felt the same rush of adrenaline like when I am getting ready to go on a rollercoaster ride. However, this time I won't act like a coward, and I will own this dance.

I walked on the stage gracefully; I started dancing as soon as the music started. I kept a look of confidence on my face and I started to get lost in the melody of the music, and I made sure that every movement was graceful and perfect. Soon enough, it wasn't hard to make it look like I was at ease, because I was at ease. Once I got off the stage, and I was backstage a weight was lifted off my shoulders. It wasn't only because I finished my performance, but it was something else and I couldn't put my finger on it. My mom walked up to me as we were walking back to our seats and she was telling me how confident and graceful I looked while dancing. Then a lady came up to me, she had raven hair and chocolate, beady brown eyes. "You were amazing and you performed so well," she said in a mesmerized manner. It was then that I understood what my mom was talking about yesterday that how these are the moments when you are the most exhilaratingly alive. I felt changed in a way and it was like I had scared away all of the ghosts in my head and that I have reached a huge milestone. Satisfied with myself, I sat down with my new-found confidence.