

Failure Is The Best Character Builder

It is the usual story of a child of divorce, always looking for approval of the parent who left them. When I was two years old my father left us and ever since I have searched for his approval and attention, mostly through things he loved: sports. Striving to be something I was not and failing at it changed my life and opened my eyes to the fact that only I can be me, and that is the best thing I can be is just plain, simple, little me.

I have always been more of a girly girl and not that interested in participating in any sport. Seeing how much my father loved watching his four other daughters succeed in a sport made me want that adoration and love too. I attempted to play tennis, volleyball, basketball, and softball. None of these earned me any stripes in his book. I tried playing tennis and we would be up at the court, he would serve, I would swing my racket either early or late and he would yell. We would try volleyball; he would spike the ball, then I would not dive for it because I did not want to hit my knees on the ground and he would be upset that I was so 'superficial'. Next we tried basketball, and because I am so tall he thought I would be able to pick it up and just go with it, but no. I flunked basketball because my hand-eye coordination did not agree with the basket. Lastly, I tried softball, and I swung too early when he pitched. Even off the tee I would miss the ball. I would drop the tosses he threw and I would either hit someone very hard with the ball or it would go about 100 feet in the opposite direction.

Sports were a no go just like me getting the approval from my father. With nowhere else to turn, I started dance and band to recover from my failure because I have always been musical. Throughout my struggles to earn the approval of my father, I had earned the courage to try new things. This courage helped me to become the person I am today, not necessarily athletic but more daring than before. The search for his love and adoration showed me that you do not need the approval of others, even if they are like that lost figure in your life. All you need to carry on and be happy is to try your best. Only you can be you. Only you can get out there and beat the odds. And only you can be the best you that you can be. That is what I learned searching for my father's affection. Only I can be me and only I can show the world that I am the change they are looking for.

The realization that my father loved and adored me even though I could not field the ball, serve the ball, dive for the ball, or score that basket hit me harder than anything. For a period of my life, I had not succeed to be what I strived to be, but that was for the better. If I could do all of the things that athletes do, I would not have marched around in the Georgia Dome as a freshman, marched down Main Street USA as a sophomore, and would not have placed high in a super band regional. Sometimes failure is the best character builder.