

Tackling Weakness

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Everyone has things they are good at and things that challenge them in life. In other words, everyone has their strengths and their weaknesses. The word ‘weakness’ can feel so negative at times. It seems to leave one at a disadvantage, feeling like you are not good enough and frail. Having a weakness brings out our flaws and leaves us feeling vulnerable. But here’s the thing about weaknesses; everyone has them.

I attended All Saints Academy, Catholic Central, Oakland University, and then finished my degree at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Nursing through Aquinas College. One of my weaknesses was test taking. And as you know, tests seem, and can be, so important when it comes to school and being successful. They say that everyone learns differently, and yet in the academic world there comes a point when each of us is tested the same way. Throughout my schooling, I felt my friends were so much better at test taking than I

was. It always felt as though they did not have to try as hard when I always had to really work at it. It seemed they could put minimal time in studying for an assessment and do better than I did after putting in much more time. I went through all of the phases... feeling angry, being frustrated, crying, and sometimes even denial.

The first thing that I had to do was accept it. Once I accepted it, I could make a plan to tackle it. I had to figure out exactly how I learned best, and make that a priority. I had to get rid of distractions and find ways to take control of my body and mind when I began to feel anxious or out of control. Deep breathing, yoga, stretching, and meditation were all good strategies for me. And I figured out I did not have to do it alone. I think parents and teachers helping children, teenagers, and even young adults learn and embrace that there is no shame in asking for help is critical. Eventually, I realized I actually found strength in working on this weakness. I learned to concentrate better. I became more productive.

But all of this hard work did not mean I was always as successful as I wanted to be. Nursing school was the hardest thing I have ever done. The workload is heavy and the material is complex. My professors expected a lot out of me, and they had no issue telling you how much time, effort, and energy it would take. This could be discouraging at times because I knew that this was something I struggled with. As I would sit at my dining room table and study late into the night before an exam, it came to a point where I had to learn that my best effort was enough. A majority of

the time after exams, when we would get our scores back, my peers would get higher scores than me. I learned to accept that my best was enough, and that was all I could really do. I didn’t have to be perfect, and I didn’t always need more. Not everyone can be good at everything, and this is perfectly okay. After one can recognize and accept their shortcomings, accepting those limitations is truly freeing.

Through tackling a weakness, it is important to be kind to yourself. Just as we all have weaknesses, it follows we all have strengths. It is important to recognize these strengths and be sure that we use them for the greater good. Use your strengths to better yourself and other people. Just as we seek guidance to navigate our own weaknesses, we must use our strengths to help others, too.

Our struggles help develop us into who we are, and believe it or not, they really can make us stronger. God made each of us with intention, fearfully and wonderfully, and when we are struggling, we need to remember that.