

There is one thing you should know about me. I have not always been the gregarious person as people may see. It costs me a long time of internal conflicts and self-struggling to add zest to the picture of the old dull me.

During my teenage, I was only a dim shadow of my own inferiority complex. Whenever it came to talking with my brilliant peers, I would immediately become conscious of my absurd spectacles, silly pigtails and skinny figure. That ridiculous image was blushing like a beetroot when mumbling some nonsense, which brought jeering and laughter to her audience's faces and silent tears inside her. Soon, I was labeled "book-worm" in the cruelest sense of the word. In the crowd, I never heard my voice or even recognized myself. At home, I spent hours on grandiose dreams of becoming a monitor or a leading actress in a school play. Some times, when imagination went wild, I saw myself standing among rafts of admirers, who burst into applause every time I spoke. That vision soon became an illusion as I put my feet on the ground again. I was actually a mere zero, a poor provincial mouse with huge dreams and little courage, a quirky pedantic book-worm who had yet to learn how to love herself.

Things changed, however, as I passed a freaking exam to one of the top-notch high schools in the country.

Exposed to a such a new, interesting environment, I decided that I would stay different. And a chance came to make it real. My class was going to hold a music show, and we needed a vocalist. This intrigued me a lot. After all, I had always loved to sing. Many times I had

locked myself in my room, dancing and singing as if I were performing on a grand stage. Hardly had I made a decision when I heard my voice raising among the chaotic sounds of the hot debates, asking whether I might take the stand. Suddenly, hundreds of astonishing and curious eyes stared at me.

" That's great, have you ever performed in a show ?" smiled the teacher warmly as she looked at me.

" ...Actually... no, but ...I'll try my best..." I felt like crying.

" So, why not let us enjoy your songs here," spoke the teacher in the most encouraging way I've ever noticed.

Why not? I wanted to sing and she gave me a chance. Frankly I had always been proud of my voice and craved to show it off. The chance had come, and I could never let it go. My fear calmed down, and I then heard myself singing the favorite rhymes

...Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens

Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens

Brown paper packages tied up with strings

These are a few of my favorite things...

The fear vanished, and I even found myself swinging to the melodious tune, as if the classroom had turned into my familiar stage. I was singing because that was my passion and it should be known to every one. I was singing because I no longer wanted to hide under the shell of a lethargic tortoise, or act as a pariah. That was why I did it passionately with all my heart.

Silent for a while. And then the whole class were cheering wildly, and I heard whistles every where. I was swimming in the endless tides of applause. I finally sunk in happiness.

Since then, I began to understand that it is not at all impossible to control your nervousness, and there is actually little difference between congenital courage and one gained through practice. Bearing this in mind, I tried hard to make my voice heard in every class debates, draw my teachers' and friends' attention to my laborious effort. Whenever I stood up, I tried to plant my feet firmly and blend all my energy to get my idea across. I nourished my confidence through many music shows, oral contests or college fairs. Gradually, the image of my odd appearance quitted my mind, putting me at ease to express myself. Every morning, just after leaving my cozy bed, I would stand for a while in front of the mirror, and smile to the reflection of a new, interesting me inside. I have finally learned how to love myself.

Bravery was not mine by nature, but I have learned how to obtain it. The important thing is to realize what you are looking for and be determined to step through when the door is

open. That lesson I have gained from my own experience, and I know it will still be useful for me in every walks of life.