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Learning Through Obstacles

Throughout my life, I have had many instances where I have had to overcome conflict and learn from it. The scenario that will stick with me forever is my hearing loss. It showed me how others in society struggle with similar and different things, but we all work together to live in a world that we do today. Having hearing loss often makes me feel misunderstood in group conversations, leading to frequent conflicts. Over time, I have learned to advocate more effectively for myself by asking friends to face me when speaking or to use text messages for clarity in noisy environments. Many people throughout society are nervous to use their voice due to not wanting to be judged. I think coming together to support one another is one of the best things we can do. A disability may be viewed as an obstacle that is unable to be overcome. I didn't understand why that was the case until I was identified as being profoundly hard of hearing in my right ear at the end of my fifth grade school year.

I will never forget the day when I realized I couldn't hear out of my right ear. My new set of headphones arrived in the mail. I was so excited! I ripped open the package, quickly connected them to my phone, and turned on music. To my disappointment, only the left side was loud and clear. The right headphone was muffled and low-sounding. I thought the headphones were broken. I asked my mom to try them on and listen. She did, and she said they sounded fine. She was able to hear the music from both sides. That's when I realized the headphones weren't

broken. Instead, it was me, and that's the moment I knew I had hearing issues. After that day, I went to many doctor and audiologist appointments, and before long, I had my own hearing aid. This came with many emotions.

Although I was excited to hear sounds with the use of my hearing aid, I was also embarrassed and worried that I would get judged by people around me. Many people in society have a disability that others do not know about, and this is why it is good to not judge others based on an outside image and to give everyone a chance. People hate looking different than others, and they just want to fit in and be normal. I knew my perspective had to change in order for me to be successful in all parts of my life, just like other may have to change some of their thinking. Many people face this obstacle in my life, and this is a perfect moment to turn it into a blessing. This shows that everyone has to make a choice whether it be a hard or easy one. We all have to work for one another and support others' needs and wants.

Having unilateral hearing loss has helped me grow and taught me many life lessons that will stick with me forever. First of all, it made me appreciate and respect people's differences. People throughout society have gotten better about accepting others for who they are, but there is definitely more as a whole we can do. I am not quick to judge people based on the way they look or even where they live. I realize that things are not always as they seem. Secondly, I have learned that my success is dependent on my actions. I often have to study more than others in order to get the grades I want. Throughout my middle and high school years, I have learned to speak up for myself when I need help. Self-advocating has been a huge key to my success in academics, sports, and many other clubs. The last and perhaps most important lesson I have learned is that regardless of my disability, anyone can achieve any goal that they want to pursue.

This shows that everyone in society has a voice, and in order to have peace, we have to listen to others.