

Success

In the 7th grade, when the opportunity arose to do something I had always dreamed of, I took the chance. Auditioning for the school play was perhaps the most courageous thing I had ever attempted in my 13 years of life. I had always wanted to be in a play and I decided to put myself out there and audition. Waiting outside of the doors to the classroom in which I would be auditioning, I was a nervous wreck. Feelings of inadequacy surged through me and I trembled. Still, I mustered up what courage I could find and walked into the classroom. Like a panel of judges, the directors sat at a rectangular table in a row, watching as I walked in. I introduced myself rather shakily, and proceeded to audition in front of the directors. I performed a series of tasks that they gave me, such as reading from the script, acting out certain scenarios, and then singing a line out of the main song in the play. I had been expecting that some singing would be involved, as the play was known to have include this famous song. I was so glad when it was over, I nearly ran out of the room as they thanked me.

Weeks later, when the cast list was up, I was devastated to not find my name on the list. A deeply insecure part of me at that age felt that the decision was deserved. I was so utterly defeated that I told myself I would *never* audition for another play again. When I arrived home after school that day, I dreaded telling my parents that I had not made it in. I avoided speaking to them at all costs and finally my mother asked me what was wrong. I broke out into tears and told her that I had not been good enough, that I would *never* be good enough. With her words of encouragement, by the time the next play rolled around in 8th grade, I had decided to try again. This time, though I was still nervous, I did noticeably better. I was no longer consumed by the fear of failure, but was emboldened by the hope of success. When the cast list was up, one name on the page seemed to bulge out to me in its deep, black script. *Maddie Kleinschmidt*. I had made it. Not only had I made it into the cast, but I had gained a singing solo!

This experience has been so central to me in my life as I learned a valuable lesson that I keep with me always: never, ever give up. When things do not go right the first time, it is never really the end. There is always room to grow and improve, and most importantly to *try again*.

Though it can be terrifying and disheartening to try to do something that you have failed at before, I have learned that it is more than worthwhile to continue to strive forward in determination. I think this experience has prepared me for college because surely trials will come and I will not immediately get everything I hope for. Failure is just a part of life, but understanding that there is always a chance to try again can make all the difference. As Samuel Smiles, a personal development author, once wrote, "We learn wisdom from failure more than from success: we often discover what will do, by finding out what will not do; and he who never made a mistake, never made a discovery."