

## Be Proud Of Who You Are

By: Andrea

Everyone has differences. Sometimes those differences are the things that make you special. That's why you shouldn't be ashamed or embarrassed of yourself or who you are. In the story Dancing In The Wings by Debbie Allen, Sassy is a girl who begins to not feel confident about herself, but soon realizes that her long legs and big feet are her special gifts.

Early in the text, Sassy is proud of her legs and feet. She doesn't really care that she is different, so when her older brother Hughie teases her, she shot right back and was sassy. "At least I don't have that big forehead lookin' like a streetlamp." Sassy replied. But at dance class, it was different. She was doing tendu at the bar when Miss Katherine walks down the line and trips on Sassy's long legs. Still, she was sassy and isn't offended. This shows that she is confident and not the least bit embarrassed.

In the middle, Miss Katherine announces that Mr. DeBato will be coming to find young and talented dancers for the summer festival in Washington D.C. Sassy is excited. I think she is excited because she didn't think her legs and feet will get in the way. But as Sassy walks up to the sign-up sheet, Molly and Mona giggle. "Oh please, she'll never make it. They said talent, not a tyrannosaurus." says Mona. Right after Sassy hears this, she grabs her things and runs into the parking-lot. This represents that Sassy finally lost her confidence about herself, mostly about her legs and feet.

After Sassy sobs for a while, a familiar truck drives in. It's Uncle Redd. Sassy is not in the mood for his jokes, but has a talk with him. Uncle Redd encourages Sassy by saying, "Listen gal, if I was as tall and pretty as you, I wouldn't need to wear red so people know it's me comin' and goin'. All you gotta do to make your mark on the world is to walk into a room." I agree with him. Sassy should be proud of herself because her differences are a gift.

After Sassy regains her confidence, she goes to the auditions the next day wearing a bright yellow leotard instead of black. She also shows-off her ballet

moves and does better than the others. She does this to prove that she isn't ashamed of being herself again. At the end of class, Mr. DeBato calls Sassy over to him only to find out that she made it to the festival! "All you have to do to be noticed is to walk into a room. Dismissed," he says. I believe that Sassy should always be proud of her gifts, which are her legs and feet. Go Sassy!

At the end of the story, Sassy realizes that her differences are what make her special. Everyone has gifts, and you should be proud of them. They make you special, and that's why they matter. Don't think of your uniqueness as a disaster, but think of them as a gift.

# Lets Taco'bout It

By: Christopher

Throughout history people have been discriminated against because of their differences. Luckily, there have been heros along the way who have fought for what was right. Today, this battle still continues in the world, our communities, and even our schools. However people are still standing up for the common good. For example, the story taco head, by viola canales, is about being yourself, and not being ashamed of it.

At first Sophia is scared to be herself. Every morning when Sophia gets her tacos sophia asks her mother, "Mama can I have some lunch money or a white sandwich instead?", Sophia asks this because she is terrified of getting called a "beaner" which made her terrified of being herself. The school cafeteria is mostly where Sophia hid her personality, for example, she goes to the end of the lunchroom to gobble up one of her tacos wrapped in a paper bag, and then eats the other one outside, alone. But one day while taking a bite of her second taco, Sophia's nightmare comes true, she gets called a "Taco head".

Sophia feels a bit better because of coach Clarke. After people started chanting "Taco head", coach Clarke confronts them. But just imagine if coach clarke hadn't confronted them. The next monday coach clarke invites sophia to eat with her, coach Clarke does this because she found out that Sophia isn't eating, and she doesn't want Sophia suffering in silence.

Sophia accepts herself for who she is. The next week, coach Clarke, and Sophia ate together again. "Do you want to know how to kick that girl hard? By kicking her butt in school.", Coach Clarke says this because she wants Sophia to own up to that girl, and to finally be herself. Coach Clarke's plan worked, and Sophia gets higher grades than the girl. After Sophia, and

coach Clarke's lunches together, Sophia, and other mexican american started eating their lunches out in the open proudly.

Some people think that taco head is about a girl that is embarrassed about her tacos. But Taco Head is really about being yourself. Taco Head is an amazing book because of the life lessons it has like, it's ok to be different, be proud of your culture, and own up to bullies. Now go, and make the world a better place with confidence, and kindness.



## Miss Marble

By: Johnny

Determination leads to success and success leads to happiness. When Lupe thought of marbles she turned happy. In the story Marble Champ by Gary Soto there is a girl named Lupe who is determined to win a sport.

One way how Lupe is determined is because she exercises every day. "I've been practicing" Lupe said to her father. Lupe always exercises by doing her finger pushups until her thumbs get sore. Lupe also exercises by squeezing a eraser 100 times a day so her thumb gets stronger. Another way how Lupe showed that she exercised a lot was when she left her homework in her backpack just to exercise. When Lupe did that she surprised me because Lupe is a straight A's student. That shows that Lupe is determined

Another way how Lupe is determined is that she practices with other people. Lupe is always practicing for the championships. Lupe practices marbles by playing her brother and Alfonso, a neighborhood kid who is supposed to be a champion. "Man she's bad, she could beat the other girls for sure, I think. Alfonso said. Every day for Lupe was practice, practice, practice, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze. Lupe's father was so happy for her that he even rigged some lights in the backyard so Lupe could practice after dark. Sometimes when Lupe is tired she lays down and listens to her brother who is giving her tips on how to shoot.

In the end Lupe's determination helps her win the championships. At the championships Lupe beat her first opponent easily. Lupe invited the girl, named Rachel to stay with her. That shows that Lupe is determined to win and to be a great person. Lupe beat her next three opponents. Next

thing she knew she was facing her last opponent, THE GIRL WITH THE BASEBALL CAP. They had started the match, a few minutes later something would happen that would change Lupe's life for ever... "I did it" Lupe said under her breath. It finally happened, she had won a sport. Lupe had won because she was determined and she believed in herself. All of the things Lupe did helped her win the championships. Lupe knew that she could win. I think Lupe won because she is smart and she has strategies.

In the end the author shows that if you try your best you can do it! When i read this book I realized that trying will lead you to a whole new path in life.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is a 9 year old kid that loves to write. The boy also likes to write about adventures with his friends. Throughout the years the boy has illustrated and written a lot of books.

Emily \_\_\_\_\_  
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### **IF YOU WORK HARD, YOU CAN DO IT**

Literature often tells how some people in the world can't do things that others may be able to do. One person may be able to play baseball, but someone may not even be able to hit a ball. It's just how the world works. In the story "The Marble Champ", by Gary Soto, Lupe learns she can do something she never thought she would do. She played and won a sport. Some people think this story is about a girl who wins a game of marbles. Really, it's not. I think it is about a girl who steps out of her shell, tries something new, and succeeds. She does it only because she worked hard and believed in herself.

First, Lupe won marbles because she worked hard. Lupe has dreams about being an athlete and she is going for them. She worked hard to be good at marbles. I know this because she went hard on herself. She did 20 push-ups on her fingers to strengthen her wrists. After, she was breathing hard and her muscles ached and burned from exhaustion. This proves she worked hard. She also worked hard because she squeezed a rubber eraser 100 times. The next day, her thumb was so sore, she couldn't hold a marble or even send one flying with power. Gary Soto even stated in the story, "Practice, Practice, Practice. Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze." This is different from when she wasn't good at sports because she never practiced or worked toward it because she thought she could never do it. One more reason showing she worked hard is, she left her homework in her backpack because she was anxious to go practice marbles. She did that because she was already is smart and a straight-A student and she

wants to be a star at sports too. Gary Soto even said, "The next day she left her homework in her bag and practiced for 3 hours straight." It could be that she gives up her school abilities to do something she never thought she would do.

Finally, Lupe won marbles because she believed in herself. When Lupe arrived at the baseball fields, where the championships were held, she knew she would be the next marble champ. Lupe's confidence made her win. This is important because when you have confidence, you know you can do anything, even win. When Lupe walked up to the table, she took off her mittens. People stared and told her she couldn't play with a "broken thumb." Lupe ignored those comments and had confidence. When the game began, Lupe beat her first 2 opponents easily and felt bad, so she invited them to stay with her. This shows she is a good sport. Lupe's last opponent was tough and dead serious. Lupe still knew she would win. Lupe was losing to the girl but she kept telling herself she could do it. As soon as the game was tied, Lupe rocketed two marbles from the circle. As she predicted, she was the grand marble champ holding the bigger trophy. This is giving me the idea that Lupe will finally be good at sports.

As you can see, Lupe Medrano stepped out of her academic shell and into the world of sports. She did this because she worked hard and believed in herself. Now, if you have a challenge you are dying to overcome, just remember Lupe and how she had to work herself to succeed. So, thanks to Lupe, I know I can do anything I want by working hard and telling myself, "I can do this."



## *A Literary Essay on the Story Dancing in the Wings*

*By Rania*

*Sometimes you'll come across bullies who will tease and make you feel bad for who you are. However, you can always ignore them or just get away from them. Sassy, in Dancing in the Wings is a character who chose to hear their comments but not listen. Some people might think Dancing in the Wings is about a girl who just wants to get good at ballet, but I think it's about that no matter what, you should always keep going.*

*One way Dancing in the Wings shows that no matter what, you should always keep going is when Sassy was made fun by her brother but she kept going. For example, in the text Dancing in the Wings it says, "You should join the swimming team since you got those long toes and don't need any fins," my older brother, Hughie, teased." This shows that even though Sassy was teased, she did not let the words get into her and bring her down. Another example is when Sassy got home and hopped out of her uncle's car, her brother, Hughie, started teasing her. She didn't start crying and run inside. She reacted instead! This shows that sometimes, words can hurt you, but you need to do something about it. All of this proves that Hughie still made fun of Sassy, but didn't agree with him and give up on herself.*

*Another way the story Dancing in the Wings shows that no matter what, you should always keep going is when Molly and Mona shot mean things at Sassy, but she never gave up on herself. For instance, the second way Dancing in the Wings shows that no matter what, you should always keep going is when Sassy signs up for the auditions, when Molly and Mona started making fun of her, and when they giggled and laughed at Sassy's mistakes. This shows that Sassy is someone who doesn't let others' bad compliments get into her. Another example is that the story Dancing in the Wings says, "I stood as close to Mona as I could get and said, "Your little skinny short legs are going to look like chicken wings next to mine." "I'd rather look like a chicken than a turkey like you with that long neck." she answered. "Talk to the hand", I told her. This shows that Sassy ignored Mona instead of listening to her and feeling bad. All of this proves that Molly and Mona don't like Sassy, but she didn't let her "enemies" comments' make her feel bad.*

*The last way the story Dancing in the Wings shows that no matter what, you should always keep going is when Mr. DeBato commented on Sassy's movements, but*

didn't let his comments bring her down. For example, when Sassy wore her yellow leotard to ballet Mr. Debato told her that he expected everyone to wear black, but she wore her own color instead. This shows that Sassy likes to stand out instead of fit in. Another example is when the story Dancing in the Wings says, "When I finished, Mr. Debato yelled, "Young lady, you must learn to dance to the music. Up on the count of one, down on the count of three! Three! Not five! You have the rhythm of a troglodyte. Again!" this shows that Sassy was corrected, listened to the corrections, but didn't think "I should give up." She kept going. All of this shows that Mr. Debato has his own way of doing things, but Sassy chose to do it her way.

Some people might think Dancing in the Wings is about a girl who wants to get good at ballet, but I think it's about that no matter what, you should always keep going. In parts of the story, sassy was made fun of, but didn't listen to what the bullies said. Sometimes she reacted, and sometimes she didn't say anything. People who make fun of you come and go. Whatever they say is negative, and you should never listen. Dancing in the Wings shows us that in life, you'll get bullied but it's never something to make a fit about.