
The Power of Failure: College Admission Essay Sample

The soccer ball is coming right at my face, I flinch momentarily and it bounces off me into my own goal. What have I done? In short, I have most likely just caused my team to lose the game, and all because I moved a bit to the right. In the moment, I was sure that this was my greatest failure on the field and there was no hope for a win. All that mattered in the moment was that I failed my team and there would be no amazing comeback like in a Hollywood movie. That one action had probably just ruined my team's chances of playing for first place. It did not occur to me until much later that while my failures are not going to feel beneficial in the moment; it is what I accomplish after the drawback that defines me.

First, let me go into detail what happening during that soccer tournament one spring day last year. The teams were tied at one in the second half and I was playing as the central defender. Then it happened: the opposing team took a corner kick and I tried to get the ball out of the box. However, it hit my shoulder and went into our own goal. I was literally crushed, sinking on my knees, apologizing to the rest of the defense while the rival team was cheering and congratulating each other. I thought for sure the game would be lost because of that play and my team would resent me for losing the tournament.

Then the unthinkable happened: one of my teammates came up to me and said, "Don't worry about it, mistakes happen. Get up and I'll score a goal for you." I looked at her as she helped me up, amazed at her quick forgiveness, and the game resumed. After this incident, the whole team went on to tie, and later win the game by a goal. Thankfully, my incident was forgotten about in the exhilaration of the achievement.

Looking back upon this experience, a quote from Richard Nixon comes to mind: "The greatness comes not when things go always good for you. But the greatness comes when you're really tested, when you take some knocks, some disappointments, when sadness comes. Because only if you've been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain." It would have been easier to win if I had not scored against my own team. However, this experience showed that even in small failures, such as a cheap, unwelcome goal, there is always the chance for recovery, and in that recovery, one can define him or herself. Most of the time, one cannot inherit greatness, or be gifted with it. Instead, one must go through many failures to become better. While the failure did bring disappointment and a feeling of hopelessness, it also brought the team together to eventually win the game. Failure defines every person, and without it, no one would be able to better themselves because of it.

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