

My Journey through “We Put in Work: Endurance, Resilience, and Strength”

By Clarissa Rodriguez

Nobody talks about how draining it is to feel like you are falling back into the same spot you tried so hard to get out of. As a student-athlete, I often found myself in that position where I was standing at the edge of defeat and became exhausted. Whether it was during my tournaments, or a confusing math lecture, I have felt like trying my best was just not enough. I could practice for hours and study for hours, yet still be unsatisfied with my performance. I would find myself getting frustrated if I did not see results within a couple of days. During these difficult moments, I have learned that you need to remember why, stay resilient, and surround yourself with positivity.

When things get hard, a strategy I found works is reminding myself why I started. For example in my sport; volleyball. Every loss and missed point, I reminded myself that I play because of the energy and people the game brings; not necessarily to win. Although winning is a good feeling, having a supportive team and knowing that I am surrounded by people who share the same passion is even better. Getting home after 8 hours of school and 2 hours of practice, it became hard to find the energy to do anything. When I felt like not studying or turning in an assignment, I reminded myself why I try so hard in school; to make my parents proud. Both of them have given up so much so I could have an education and not trying in school throws all of that away. In a way, I felt like giving up on myself was like giving up on those who love and support me and realizing that is what drives my strength.

Staying resilient is another strategy I found. As cliché as it sounds, life is not easy and will test you. Resilience is all about getting back up every time you get knocked down. A saying I live by is “Tough times don’t last, but tough people do”. Instead of focusing on those setbacks or letting those mistakes define you, reflect on them. I have found that staying resilient has gotten me through my volleyball season. Instead of dwelling on every shanked pass or missed serve, I saw a change when I analyzed what went wrong and adjusted myself. Staying resilient also helped me in my studies. Each time I received a bad grade, I would feel this huge weight come over me. It was so disappointing knowing that my time spent studying was wasted. Instead of accepting it, I reviewed my errors and attended office hours. Even though I did not instantly grasp the content, progress was progress in my eyes, no matter how small. By staying resilient, I was able to keep moving forward with more wisdom than before.

My last strategy is to surround yourself with positivity. The people around you truly do matter. Every time I was surrounded by negativity, I found that it followed me. Energy is contagious and finding a circle that supports, challenges, and uplifts me was how I was able to keep pushing forward. My current friend group is one of my biggest blessings and I do not think I’d trade the connection we have for the world. Not only do the people we surround ourselves with matter, but you yourself have to have a positive mindset. Nothing positive can come from a negative mindset. I had a bad habit of telling myself “I can’t”, which not only held me down but affected others as well. Being positive does not mean you have to hide your feelings, it means

that you do not let your negative emotions affect the energy you output into the world.

When the body screams for rest, endurance is that power inside you to continue and take on the challenge. I have reached moments where I wanted to quit countless times, and I learned to hustle hard, but not burn out. Needing rest is not a sign of weakness but a necessity. There is nothing wrong with recharging your energy and refocusing your mindset, but you have to keep in mind your goal. I have found that the temptation to quit is always the strongest at the finish line. Endure it all and finish what you have started. At the end of the day, by believing in myself and putting in the work, I pushed through many of the challenges life threw at me.