We all face different obstacles and each have different circumstances of life. For me, my biggest obstacle is my speech. I was born with a speech problem, and by the time I was three years old, not even my parents could understand me. They would need to ask my older sister to translate. Just because you have a speech impediment, doesn’t mean that you are stupid or dumb. I have been made fun of for it, people asking me what is wrong with me, and teachers misunderstand me. I do not like to repeat myself multiple times. It gets really frustrating when someone cannot understand you. I cannot change how I was made. I am trying to be better at speaking and better at saying letters and words correctly.

The first thing my parents did for me, was to get me into speech therapy. I started when I was three years old, and I am still in speech therapy to this day. My speech has gotten much better through the years, and people can finally understand me. I don't sound like mumbo jumbo anymore. I work hard on my pronunciation so that I can be heard correctly. My speech has affected my learning too. I have a hard time with reading. I get special help in school so that I can succeed. It hasn't been easy.

The second thing I did to overcome it was to get a tutor. Every summer my parents hired a teacher to work with me. I learned from tutoring, that I do not learn like everyone else. I need people to be patient with me and to be kind and caring. I work best in silence because I have a hard time concentrating. Everything in school is hard for me and it has always taken me longer to get work done. I try my best and that is all I can do. When I start feeling frustrated or overwhelmed, I know that I need to take a break. I go to bed early because I know I do better.

This experience brought out the best in me. What this experience did, was to teach me more about myself. It helped me see that I have things that are out of my control. I never thought of myself as different or weird. I am just myself, Gabe Sherman. I have a speech problem. That does not define me or label me. I know that I am not the only one who has this problem. Everyone is flawed in some way, shape, or form. I am proud of how far I have come, and I am okay with who I am.

I know I will have more obstacles in life that I will need to overcome. There will always be something that will happen and try to hold you back. If anything, my speech and difficulty reading has made me stronger. It helped me to see the good qualities in myself and to focus on those. I know that I am very good with my hands, and very mechanical like my dad. I know that I love space, I love figuring out how things work, and I love building. As long as I am always working to be better, that is all that really matters. I am practicing to be my best self, regardless of speech impediments, or learning disabilities.

Gabriel Sherman
6th Grade Essay Winner
St. Benedict Catholic School, Garfield Heights
Donna Marie Przybogews, Teacher
Lisa Oriti, Principal

Keep Moving