Football. The sport where two teams battle head on, clashing with tackles, sacks, and touchdowns. A sport a girl decided to play.

Growing up, I always felt treated as a helpless child, being a girl. Now, that seems reasonable because young girls are looked at as more frail and in need of help. But as I got older, I continued to receive the same treatment, while my brothers were told to be tough and played sports while coming home stinky from all the fun. All their fun created a dream in me from watching them- I was going to play football.

"Yeah right!" People would say to me and that I should, "keep dreaming." I did. And I played. I became a member of the team. Of course people didn't expect me to play. I mean, the skinny little girl with glasses who has no level of anger couldn't possibly survive in the midst of this raging sport. I felt hurt when I told people I played football and they would reply, "I didn't know you were being serious." And with that my eyes opened up to the bigger problems of the world, and sports was one of them. It shouldn't be weird if a boy wants to be a cheerleader. It shouldn't be weird if a girl wants to be a football player. It's just a sport! My skin is just a color! We all are human beings! Why is there so much discrimination?

With my appreciation to all the girls who had the wit to fight and play football before me, my road to being a football player was not as difficult. My teammates treated me as one of the team, to my surprise. My coach gave me the best encouragement and my parents supported me with love all the way through. And if I'm being honest, I loved how me being a girl and with the amount of strength I have made my teammates try to match up to my level of intensity. I mean, I am only a girl! I worked harder to be the fastest, strongest and an all round team player. In doing so they would always try to catch up with me on runs, and tried flipping the huge truck tires I flipped. I realized that not only does multi gender teams create unity, but it also creates a greater strength when you work as one toward a common goal.

My coach saw my potential and I was used to help out in a lot of games, while repeating the plays given as a wide receiver. I tackled two people who were running in for a touchdown, and I was able to keep the pace with my opponents. Entering this new territory of football helped to develop me into the best player I could possibly be. Was I nervous? Every game! Not because of the crowd, but what would happen if I didn't get the tackle? What if I didn't score a touchdown? What if I let down the whole team? I knew I had to push past these questions. Keeping those questions in my mind would not only slow me down but they would eventually stop me from reaching my dream. When I stopped questioning myself, not only was I able to move forward, but I was able to move on from the negative comments others said about me as well.

I found out from this personal experience that it takes actions to make people see who you are and what you can do. Speeches have the power to draw people's attention, but what did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. do before he gave those famous speeches? It's that first move that catches people's attention. Whether it's marching through the streets of Washington, waving a flag for all to see, or being a girl who plays football, it is your actions that force people to remember who you are. These are the actions that help people see that they have the power to change their world too!

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Keep Moving