

## Joanne Lee Coronado High School

Essay - (500-750 words) - Explain a situation where you had to overcome an adversity.

As Uncle comes home from work, his kids race to him and yell, "Daddy!" There's another child, lost in her tracks—a wandering soul. Her tiny hands in her jean pockets, with no one to run to and no dad to cling to. To my cousins, Uncle is their favorite playground, but where's my swing and slide? From my first-ever kindergarten musical, "The Little Red Hen," to my commitment to play golf at Yale University, my biological father wasn't there. So how did I survive without him as my thickest armor? I was too young to comprehend the bitterness of a heartache, but the emptiness of his absence was always there. I hadn't once had a conversation longer than five seconds with him, a stranger, and he had taken away the biggest, most valuable part of me—my place to call home.

But as soon as I picked up my pink Hello Kitty golf club, I knew I found my safe place. Ever since the first day on the practice range, golf has always been by my side. At my first local golf tournament, I shot a thirty-eight and tied for first. This led to the onset of a sudden-death playoff, and I quickly realized that competition aroused the most exciting feeling of passion in me. Compared to the initial round, the playoff hole seemed twice as difficult as before. My limbs shook without control, and I missed my final putt to win. From this first loss, golf challenged me—it pushed me harder and further than anything else in the world. As I grew rapidly with golf, my mentality improved and I perceived my own worth. I recognized that I could impact my journey if I planted my mind and focus in the right place. Thus, I immersed myself with true dedication—I practiced everyday till sunset, until my bleeding blisters hardened to thick calluses. Eight years passed, and my wall is now decorated with over three-hundred medals and trophies. Each one granted all the motivation I needed when failure held me back. I recently played in my last tournament as a junior—the 20th Northern Junior Championship—and won. I was in a sudden-death playoff again! As I was standing up for my putt to win this time, I wasn't trembling like I was eight years ago. I had the confidence and certainty that I would make the putt—and I did. With a powerful fist pump, I ended my season with a major victory. On the flight back home, cradling my glass trophy, I reflected back on the past. Perhaps I had replaced the absence of my dad with golf. I let the sport fill my entire life and take me to heights I would've never dreamed of. My perseverance and grit allowed me to realize that even without him, I could still thrive. Without his hand holding mine, I could still jump over muddy puddles. I had healed, but I wonder if his existence would have made me into another version of myself.

Yet, I would never want to be another Joanne. I'm striving to become a flawlessly molded form of myself, with the aid of my mom's endless sacrifice for me. I wish to continue to fill myself with endless knowledge and get denser within, to the point where I'm like an unbreakable diamond, chiseled to its highest point of admiration. I am heading in the right direction—earning several national titles in junior golf, challenging myself over my limit with my studies, and still figuring out what the rest of my story will narrate in the next chapters.

Having been a student athlete, I know that it requires a rigorous, time-consuming, and dynamic lifestyle — one that comes with the most commitment and never-ending sacrifice. Golf has enveloped my life the moment I started playing, and it has become an inseparable part of my identity; my best friend. Golf has not only led me to athletic achievements, but it has also opened up my educational opportunities by leading me to an institution of the highest caliber; I am now able to pursue several of my academic interests and passions such as studying law, film directing, acting, and politics. I'm more thrilled than ever to explore the boundless possibilities this world yields and persevere through any obstacle that could be hurdling my way. The man that I resented the most—my dad— had raised me even without knowing it. His absence gave me unusual experiences that sparked my most dynamic period of growth.