

Spencer Tolentino

Please share an instance of dealing with adversity and how you managed to overcome the difficulty

An essay must be 300 words or less.

“Time for bed!” A facade of optimism veiled my father’s countenance. The young boy I was failed to detect his sinister intentions. On the verge of wonderland, I heard impatient unzipping on the adjacent twin mattress. Reluctant whispers escaped from my mom as the mattress rustled. “Stop,” she begged. “Not in front of him.” Tears streamed down my face as my heart broke, enduring the excruciating silent cries of my mother amidst indescribable, grueling noises.

The next two weeks observed a mundane life through the eyes of a vessel. Absence defined the puppeteered mind that hardly ceased to relive the nightmare. My mom spent every waking moment protecting me from the truth, unbeknownst to the hellish cycle I was trapped in.

The night of confrontation was the desperate change that inevitably lured me out of the shell. Cries exploded from my mom, of pity for my innocence and for hiding everything. That day, I realized I could no longer depend on my dad, but I could stand up for my family. Thus, I cut off all contact with him.

Snapping the puppeteer’s strings, a newfound purpose emanated in every meaningful pursuit. Straight A’s flooded the report cards once again as I picked up the barbell. The conclusion of junior high marked the beginning of a new legacy, one that left behind fifty pounds and painful memories of a broken family—the birth of a legacy defined by resilience and purpose.

That night taught me that facing the truth, no matter how agonizing, is the only way to break free. Whether it’s enduring three years of intense wrestling or performing in national orchestral competitions, I move forward to be the man my family lost, chasing meaningful adversity to ensure that the man who was will not be the man who is.