

Yelyzaveta Podobna

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

An essay must be 300 words or less.

Everything familiar disappeared in one night. When war started in Ukraine and I moved to the US, I had to step into spaces where I didn't know the language or understand the culture, and the shock of starting over made me shut down. I felt isolated and behind in a place where everybody seemed to belong.

Despite trying to hold my life together, I fell into a deep, long-lasting depression. For over a year, I felt disconnected from everything, and in that isolation, I realized that if everything around me felt broken, I had to take control of one thing—my future. The thought of having a chance to rebuild my life in a new country became the only light I had, and that's when I chose to start from zero and fight my way forward.

Language barriers and differences in education made every class feel like I was starting from the bottom. At home, studying was nearly impossible as our internet constantly failed, and I spent most of my time helping with chores for the family hosting us. Yet I refused to fall behind and fought through hardships. I stayed after school for tutoring, spent hours reteaching lessons to myself, and sacrificed sleep to improve my English. Every small step was a way to regain control over a life that had become unpredictable.

I shifted my mindset from surviving to rebuilding, and my work ethic became the way I healed. Moving didn't just change my academics—it proved that I could build success from nothing and taught me that no matter how unstable life becomes, I can create structure, purpose, and progress.