



WHAT IT TAKES TO BE -CHALLENGED

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

We hear such words as “mentally-challenged”, “vertically-challenged” and “horizontally-challenged” and automatically find humor in those euphemisms. Those kinder terms are simply used to mask the negative connotations they are attached to, but much like spraying perfume over a dirty garbage can, they still mean the same thing: having below average intelligence or mental deficiency, being short, and being fat. Owww! Man, those words can hurt!

When people laugh at us or mock us for our failure to come up to certain parameters, we find ourselves challenged. I, for one, am health-challenged. When God handed out all kinds of health problems, I probably stood at the head of the line. He gave out hypertension, I got the worse kind: asymptomatic hypertension. But that has slowly changed since I started going over 40; I feel the headaches and the nape pains immediately when my blood pressure spikes. He gave out back aches and body pains, I probably brought a sack to get me some of that, too. He gave out bad eyesight and hearing, I went in line to get spades for myself. My children have told me repeatedly that it’s all a sign of getting old. I protest repeatedly, but it’s simply no use. The bad eyesight I have gotten from staring at the computer for hours and the bad hearing I have derived from having a headset slung over my head and covering my ears from my very first job to my current one. Ayayay! My children will never understand!

There was a time in my younger years when I fought a hard fight with being horizontally-challenged. This was always after I’d given birth since the fat deposits did not work to make me a rich woman but served to make getting into my work uniform a tremendous battle everyday. And it wasn’t just the work clothes, too. Handheld mirrors were always too small. Covering my middle with blazers and pillows was kind of strange (It’s summer and you feel cold?). Now, I’ve reached that stage where I don’t care anymore. But why the heck does the after-six diet not work anymore? Age slows down metabolism? You’ve got to be kidding!

But for all of the challenges of these kinds, there’s only one true answer: self-discipline. It is discipline that will whisper a don’t-eat-that-it’s-fattening warning to you when you pick up that extra slice of cake or take that extra scoop of ice cream to your mouth. It is discipline that will deliver a hard slap on your wrist when you pick up that fatty piece of meat and stuff it in your mouth. It is discipline that will tell you to pick up your book instead of that gadget so you can study your lessons. It is discipline that’ll tell you to work out and do reaching exercises so you can grow slimmer and hopefully, taller.

Conquer yourself and you overcome many challenges along the way.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is it difficult to be challenged in one way or another?
2. What do you consider your greatest personal challenge/s?
3. Is there ever a definite answer to all the challenges we face? Why or why not?
4. How do you face your personal challenge/s?
5. Is there any one person who has posed the greatest challenge to you? Be able to talk about that person in class and how you overcame their challenge.