

Looking Goofy

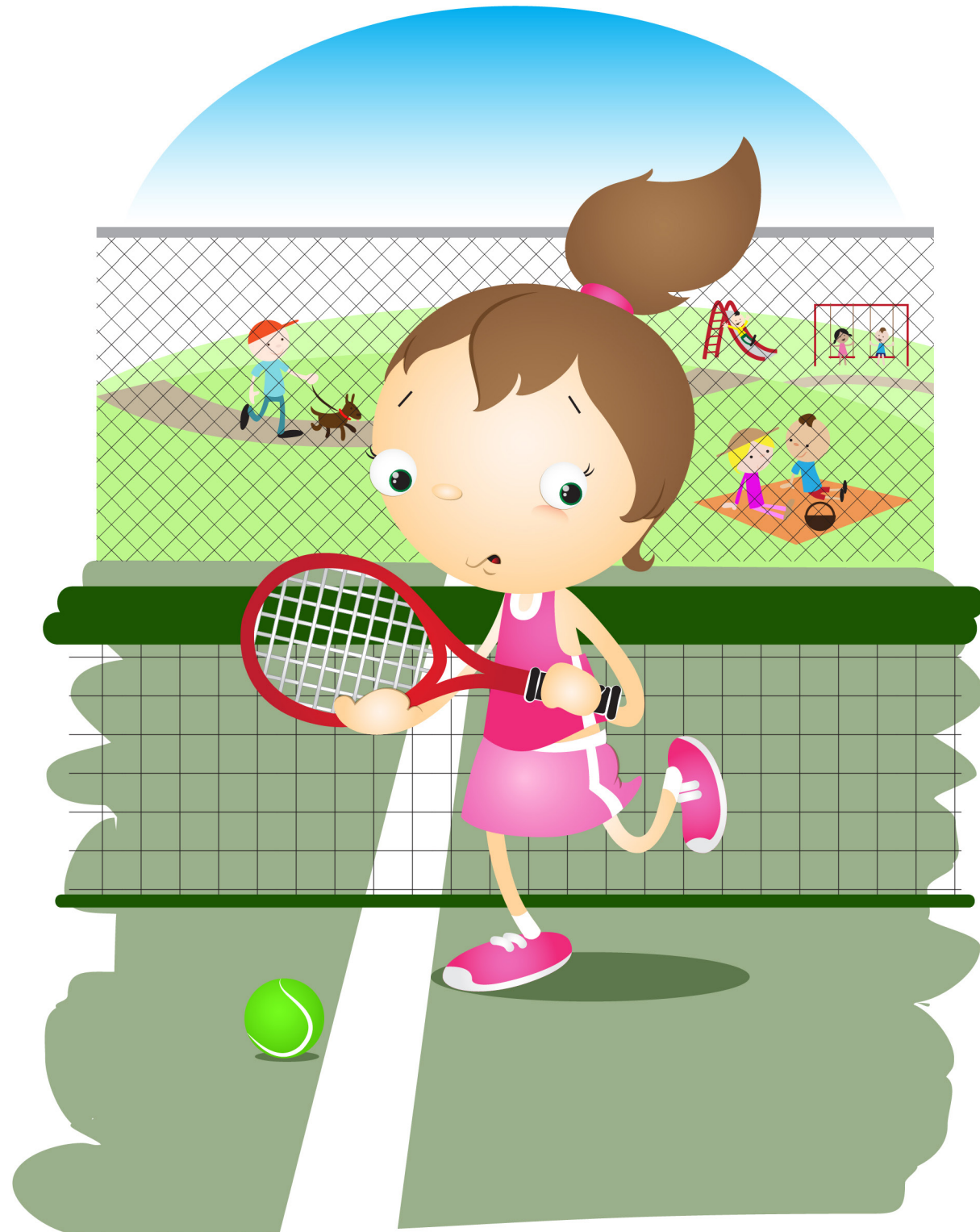
A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE DECIDED TO TAKE UP TENNIS. SHE BOUGHT ALL THE GEAR, SCHEDULED HER FIRST LESSON, AND HEADED OFF TO THE TENNIS COURTS.

WHEN SHE GOT THERE, THOUGH, SHE WAS IMMEDIATELY AWARE THAT THERE WERE OTHER PEOPLE AROUND. THERE WERE KIDS IN THE PLAYGROUND, PEOPLE WALKING THEIR DOGS, AND A GROUP OF OTHERS WATCHING A BASEBALL GAME NEARBY. ALTHOUGH NONE OF THEM WERE WATCHING *HER*, HAVING PEOPLE AROUND HER MADE HER EXTREMELY SELF-CONSCIOUS.

HER LESSON STARTED, BUT SHE COULD HARDLY HIT THE BALL FOR NERVOUSNESS. SHE KEPT LOOKING AROUND, CHECKING TO SEE IF ANYONE WAS WATCHING. SHE FELT SILLY AND CLUMSY—AND STUPID FOR EVEN TRYING TO PLAY.

FINALLY, THE INSTRUCTOR SAT HER DOWN TO CHAT. "YOU KNOW," HE SAID, "NO ONE EVER SUCCEEDS AT ANYTHING UNLESS THEY'RE WILLING TO RISK LOOKING SILLY AT FIRST."

HE EXPLAINED THAT UNTIL SHE COULD QUIT THINKING ABOUT HERSELF AND HOW SHE LOOKED ON THE COURT—BASICALLY, UNTIL SHE WAS WILLING TO LOOK SILLY—SHE'D NEVER MAKE ANY PROGRESS IN LEARNING TO PLAY.



HAVE YOU EVER OPTED OUT OF PLAYING A SPORT OR GAME BECAUSE YOU'D NEVER PLAYED IT BEFORE, AND YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK GOOFY TRYING IT OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME? HAVE YOU EVER AVOIDED ANSWERING A QUESTION IN CLASS BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T SURE IF YOUR ANSWER WAS RIGHT, AND YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK DUMB?

HOW MANY FUN THINGS MIGHT WE BE MISSING OUT ON SIMPLY BECAUSE WE'RE AFRAID TO FAIL—AFRAID OF LOOKING GOOFY? MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT PLANS MIGHT GOD HAVE FOR US THAT WE'RE IN DANGER OF MISSING OUT ON BECAUSE WE'RE AFRAID OF FAILING—SO WE NEVER EVEN TRY?

YOU MIGHT NOT SEE YOURSELF DOING GREAT THINGS, SO MAYBE YOU'RE TRYING TO EXCUSE YOURSELF FROM TAKING THE FIRST STEP IN CERTAIN DIRECTIONS. MAYBE YOU FIGURE IT'S OKAY FOR YOU TO AVOID CERTAIN THINGS BECAUSE IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A BIG DEAL NOW FOR YOU TO SKIP OUT ON IT.

REMEMBER, THOUGH, NOT ONE HISTORICAL HERO STARTED OFF AS A HERO. EACH ONE HAD TO RISK LOOKING TOTALLY SILLY IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING GREAT. AND BECAUSE THEY WERE WILLING TO LOOK SILLY, GOD DID SOMETHING GREAT THROUGH THEM.





Footnotes

² 1 Samuel 17

³ Philippians 4:13

LOOK AT DAVID GOING TO FACE GOLIATH.² HE WAS CERTAINLY THE *LEAST* LIKELY CANDIDATE AROUND. I MEAN, HE WASN'T EVEN A *SOLDIER*! HE HAD NO WEAPONS TRAINING, NO BATTLE SKILLS, NO GIANT-FIGHTING HISTORY. ON TOP OF THAT, HE WAS JUST A SCRAWNY TEEN.

BUT DID HE LET ANY OF THAT STOP HIM? NOPE. DID HE STOP WHEN PEOPLE LAUGHED AT HIM FOR OFFERING? DID HE STOP WHEN *GOLIATH* LAUGHED AT HIM? NOPE AND NOPE. HE FIGURED HE WAS THE ONE FOR THE JOB, AND HE DIDN'T LET ANYTHING GET IN THE WAY OF HIS DESTINY. HE STEPPED UP, LOOKED GOOFY, AND SLUNG THAT GIANT DEAD.

THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT WE CAN DO "ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST, WHO GIVES US STRENGTH."³ IT DOESN'T SAY "ALL THINGS PERFECTLY, WITHOUT MISTAKES," OR "ALL THINGS EASILY, WITHOUT LOOKING SILLY." IF THAT WERE THE CASE, WE WOULDN'T *NEED* HIM TO GIVE US STRENGTH. WE'D BE ABLE TO BREEZE RIGHT THROUGH EFFORTLESSLY.

IT TAKES STRENGTH TO RISK LOOKING FOOLISH. IT TAKES STRENGTH TO FAIL AND THEN TO KEEP TRYING. IT TAKES STRENGTH TO TRY SOMETHING THAT SEEMS CRAZY OR UNREALISTIC. BUT THAT'S THE STRENGTH THAT GOD HAS PROMISED TO GIVE US.

S&S link: Character Building: Social Skills: Confidence-2c

Authored by Marie Story, adapted.

Originally published on Just1Thing.

Illustrations by Alvi. Design by Stefan Merour.

Published by My Wonder Studio.

Copyright © 2016 by The Family International