

Finding My Strength

You know, they say that words can never hurt you. That's a lie. Words can cut deeper than any knife. I should know. I've been on the receiving end of those words more times than I can count.

It started in middle school. At first, it was just small things – snide remarks, whispers behind my back. But it didn't stop there. It grew into something darker, something that wrapped itself around me like a suffocating fog. Names like “loser,” “freak,” and “worthless” followed me everywhere. Every day was a battle just to keep going.

I tried to hide it. I tried to pretend it didn't bother me, but the truth is, it did. It hurt more than I ever let on. I started to believe those words, started to think that maybe, just maybe, they were right about me. I'd look in the mirror and see someone who didn't deserve kindness, who didn't deserve friends.

There were nights I cried myself to sleep, wondering why me? Why was I the target? Why was I the one they chose to put down? I felt so alone, like no one could understand the pain I was going through. But then something changed.

One day, I just... broke. Not in the way they wanted me to. Not into pieces. I broke free. I realized that I couldn't control what they said or did, but I could control how I reacted to it. I decided that their words didn't have to define me. I started to find strength within myself, a strength I didn't even know I had.

I found my voice. I stood up for myself. The first time I did it, my hands were shaking, my heart was pounding, but I did it. And you know what? It felt amazing. For the first time, I felt like I had control over my own life. I wasn't their victim anymore. I was my own person.

It wasn't easy. It still isn't. There are days when their words echo in my mind, when I feel like I'm right back where I started. There are days when I go to put on my favourite hoodie and remember what they said the last time I wore it. But then I

remember how far I've come. I remember that I am strong, that I am resilient and I put my hoodie on.

I've learned to surround myself with people who lift me up, who see me for who I really am. I've learned to love myself okay like myself, flaws and all. I'm not perfect, and I don't have to be. No one does.

So, to anyone out there who's going through what I went through, know this: You are stronger than you think. Don't let their words define you. Find your own voice, your own strength. You are not alone, and you are worth so much more than the hate they throw at you.

I am not a victim. I am a survivor. And my story doesn't end here. It's just the beginning.