The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

**Genius**

This story is about the Einsteinian “99% perspiration”. Missing is the “1% inspiration” to complete the title.

I was born ‘special’. I did not have to fight or struggle for this title, it was mine by virtue of being the first child of my always humble parents. Their humility about their ‘gifted’ child was so overt that it could hit any unsuspecting ear without malice to its cast, creed or religion. The ‘gifted’ children always learn faster than other kids, they can use words which other kids don’t know, they can read faster and better etc. I was all that, but primarily due to the fact that my parents spent time reading to me and engaging me in a variety of stimulating activities along with my school curriculum. Teachers and peers were impressed and soon I was the ‘Genius’.

The 99% ‘Genius’ went through the perspiration of taking special Maths program, Piano Lessons, theater workshops to name a few. All this propelled me further. Teachers kept raving about my ‘rare gift’ and the easily inflatable ego ballooned to enormous proportions. Soon I was more than the part, I was ‘Genius’ personified. Immediate fallout of this belief was that the ‘99% perspiration’ completely faded out in the shine and bask of the ‘Genius’.

After all I was ‘special’, ‘extremely gifted’, a ‘natural’. Struggle and hard work, were not meant for me, these were virtues to be cherished by other mortals.

Icarus fall must have hurt him physically, but mine was harder because it tormented me emotionally. Icarus fell trying to reach the Sun, but I fell trying to believe in a pedestal that did not exist. It was grade five. My teachers encouraged me to take part in a regional math competition for which I was to receive special mentoring along with a select few. I loved these special classes, to a large extent because of the new things I was learning everyday but also because it gave me the feeling of being special and entitled. And with each passing day, I grew convinced of my exclusiveness.

I was so sure of my capabilities that I wrapped myself in a cocoon of complacency. With my childish overconfidence, I ended up preforming poorly.

What followed were hours of contemplation on the injustice the world had done to me. I was shattered. It was difficult to accept that I had lost in an area that I was so good at.

That incident changed my life in many ways. I started understanding the importance of the perspiration. Understood why the best brain till date, Albert Einstein had so eloquently assigned a very high importance to it. I stopped denying that I had made a mistake. With the support of my family, I went back to hard work with the commitment I had before. If occasionally, the trauma of the failure surfaced, I pushed it back with vengeance, instead envisioning on the euphoria of success that would eventually be mine to cherish.

Our mistakes are more valuable than our victories. I have learnt from my mistakes and moved on from them in such a manner that it has made me more determined towards my goals.

I still make mistakes. But I also try my best to incorporate the learnings from my mistakes and derive my satisfaction from striving to become better each day.