Eva Brlek & Julija Kukec

I try even when it's hard





• strategies for developing a growth mindset

Mona goes to the sports playroom where she exercises, runs and jumps, plays ball, and practices different sports. She and her friends have a really good time playing sports in the playroom.

Today is the day for games and competitions in different sports that animals have been training all year long.

Mona put her sweatshirt on, took a bottle of water, and put sneakers in her backpack. She was very excited and happy about today's sports games.

Her father walked her to the locker room.

- Good luck, Mona! I'm going to sit in the audience, but I'll be here the whole time, watching you and cheering - he said and rushed to the hall.

Coach wished everyone a good time and encouraged them to do their best.

The sports games were ready to begin!



Everyone had a chance to show what they learned and practiced. The little animals took turns in the race, long jump, and obstacle polygon. Everyone tried hard, including Mona. The last discipline was - basketball. When it was almost her turn to throw the ball, Mona suddenly turned around, ran to the coach, and whispered: - I don't want to throw the ball. – Why not? – The coach asked her gently. - Because I can never hit the basket. I won't shoot, everyone will laugh at me... - Mona tried to explain and started to cry quietly.

When she heard Mona's worries, the coach gently said:

- I understand it's difficult for you to do something you are not great at. You're afraid that you won't be able to hit the basket. But try to remember that some things were difficult to you before. Remember how you couldn't tie your sneakers?

When she heard this question, Mona stopped crying, but she was still looking at the floor and just quietly said: – Yes.

 You didn't even try to tie them yourself; you always asked me to do it for you. And then we agreed that you would try it on your own. Isn't that so? – The coach asked Mona.

Mona nodded and now she got very interested in what the coach would say next.

 You practiced, you worked hard, you didn't give up. You were persistent and little by little you learned to tie your sneakers. You succeeded in your goal, and you were very proud of yourself.

- It's similar now to throwing the ball. The most important thing is that you try. You may not succeed right away, but with practice and with each new attempt, you will get better.

Mona remembered the nice feeling in her tummy the first time she showed her parents she could tie her sneakers.

 Yes. I practiced that a lot and I learned it – Mona was starting to calm down a bit and relax.





Mona nodded her head and started looking at the basket. The coach hugged her to say one more thing: – I have an idea... When you stand in front of the basket with the ball, just breathe slowly and deeply. Inhale - exhale. Then once again... inhale - exhale. This will help you focus on your goal. And then say to yourself - I can do it!

- And what if I still don't hit the basket?
- Maybe you will, maybe you won't. But it's important that you at least try. What do you say? Will you try? The coach was persistent and excited. Mona smiled at her and walked towards the basket.

Soon it was her turn. Mona took the ball and did as the coach told her. She took a deep breath, exhaled a few times, and said to herself: - I can do it!

She threw the ball hard... but the ball missed the hoop. She had two more attempts. She threw the ball a second time. Now it touched the hoop but didn't go through the net. She didn't make it again. On the third attempt, she took another deep breath, exhaled, threw the ball, and... she scored!

Mona was overjoyed and started to jump around. Her friends clapped their hands. The coach gave her a high five, and her dad in the audience gave her a proud thumbs up.