

How do we react when people say, “it is impossible” or “you can’t do it”? Do you get discouraged or motivated? Do you strive to prove them wrong or fall under the pressure and give up? Edgar Guest wrote a poem that states anything can be done if we “buckle in” and try. Guest’s poem is filled with optimism and encouragement to never give up, even through hard times.

It seems our human default when something seems difficult is to turn to the negative and give up. I think it is important to turn off this natural tendency and remain positive when someone suggests to be pessimistic. Especially when that pessimism comes from inside. Seven years ago I started karate telling myself that this was an all-boys sport and I would never become a black belt. Inside I scoffed: “oh you’ll never do that,” but I rose to the challenge and now I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree black belt. One of the greatest joys of this struggle is the group of best friends that I made along the way. Guest suggests in a few lines the idea of singing as you go. As I reflect on the more challenging tasks in life, I often find myself singing a song that motivates, or speaks to my heart as I press on.

One person that I keep in mind along my journey is Helen Keller. When I think of the perseverance described in Guest’s poem I cannot help but think of all that she accomplished. At a young age Keller was struck with a disease that left her blind and deaf. Many believed she would never be able to communicate again, but when she saw through the struggle of her lessons she surprised everyone. Not only did Keller overcome her own communication barriers, but she became an author and speaker as well as an inspiration to others like herself. These people may have found it preferable to be pessimistic at first, but by turning towards her “grin and do it” attitude they pressed on.

In Guest’s poem he states “There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done” – only your voice matters when deciding what you can accomplish. I am so glad I decided to silence the doubting voices that tried to turn me away from completing my goals. I’m also thankful for people like Helen Keller who never gave up and set a positive mindset for us all to admire. The next time someone says “It can’t be done” look them in the eye and do it.