

Gladys P. Todd Academy Application Essay

A famous quote that defines who I am is "If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence you have won even before you have started." This quote belongs to Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican political activist of the mid twentieth century. Two of his notable achievements were sparking a mass Black nationalist movement and founding the Universal Negro Improvement Association, or UNIA, which focused on the betterment of Africa. This quote originated from *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Or Africa for the Africans*, a book the activist published in 1923 that consists of a compilation of Garvey's speeches and articles of the time.

This quote means if you give up before you try, you have already lost. On the contrary, if you do have confidence in yourself, you have won by giving yourself a chance. This reflects my life and academic goals because I have had low self-confidence in the past and I am trying to work on that in the future.

One reason this quote embodies my academic goals is because I resonate with having low self-confidence. I have often been told I excel in academics, and hearing this made me afraid to try to participate in other aspects of life. For example, I used to be opposed to playing sports since I thought I was not talented enough, although as a kid I participated in both swimming and soccer. I ended up quitting both sports, even after leading my soccer team to a victory in my position as goalie. I was nervous I would eventually fail my team, so I resigned before I got the chance. As the years went on, my fear of failure bled into my academic life, causing me to stop participating in optional academic activities such as spelling bees. Eventually I stopped trying new things

all together, spending years confined in the safety of my comfort zone as the people around me urged me to strive for more.

This quote also reflects the change in my life in which I decided to finally pursue new things. I can pinpoint the moment I decided to turn my life around when I auditioned for the All-District Choir, a chorus consisting of singers from Virginia. Even though typically I refused to audition for anything for fear of failure, I had a great appreciation for choir and decided to take a chance. I will never forget the feeling I had after my audition. I sat in silence because I thought I failed horribly, regretting even coming in the first place. Afterwards, I paid no attention to the choir, as I had already come to terms with the fact that I had not gotten in. Later that month, as I was sitting in my choir room, my teacher came up to me and asked if I had checked the acceptance list. I shook my head no and she replied that I had gotten in, and that I should have more confidence in myself. This moment gave me the confidence I needed to try new things. Now I plan to join the James Monroe tennis team next year, All-District Choir, All-State-Choir, and this program. Now I take the quote "If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence you have won even before you have started" to heart, refusing to let my low self-confidence defeat me before I am actually defeated.