



I really wanted to bowl,
but I was worried about
everything!

A W K W

By Jennifer Maddy
(Based on a true story)

“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Hilary, and I’m 11. If you’ve ever been bowling, you know you have to roll a ball down a long lane and try to knock down the pins at the end. You also have to wear funny-looking shoes. When you knock down all the pins at once, you get a strike. But that’s not as easy as it sounds.

The first time I went bowling was for my friend Meg’s birthday a couple of years ago. Meg invited a bunch of girls from Primary and school. I was excited to go, but I was a

AWKWARD!

little nervous too. I always worried about trying new things.

We walked into the bowling alley and heard the loud crash of balls hitting the pins. We all jumped and giggled at the sound.

“OK, girls,” Meg’s mom said. “Go over to the counter and get your bowling shoes.”

Bowling shoes? I didn’t know I would have to wear different shoes. The girls started telling the worker their shoe size, but I shrunk to the back of the group. I had really long feet, and there was no way I could shout out my shoe size like everyone else. I was afraid they’d laugh and make fun of my big feet. I walked back to our lanes and sat down.

“Don’t you want to bowl, Hilary?” Meg’s mom asked.

“I think I’ll just watch for now,” I said.

The girls came back and plopped down to put their shoes on. Everyone laughed and talked, and I smiled with them. Maybe I would get some shoes later.

But as I watched my friends bowl, I started worrying about how I would look. I was taller than my friends, and I had long arms and legs. I wasn’t very good at sports, either. I thought I looked like an off-balance windmill when I tried

to do sporty things—awkward!

“Hey, Hilary,” Meg called. “Do you want to try with my ball? You can take off your shoes and bowl in your socks.”

I really wanted to, but I was too worried about everything. (I told you I worried a lot!)

“No, thanks,” I said. “I’m having fun watching.”

It wasn’t a lie. I was having fun watching my friends. But I knew I would be having a lot more fun if I could just stop worrying and bowl with them. So I sat watching by myself.

After that day, I promised myself that I would be braver about trying new things. A few months later I was back at the bowling alley again. It was McCall’s birthday this time. I blushed when I had to say my shoe size out loud, but then I looked around and saw that no one had even noticed. That made me feel a little better.

When it was my turn, I made myself pick up a bowling ball. Then I shuffled slowly up to the lane. I felt like everyone was watching me as I tried to make my body move as gracefully as possible. The ball rolled down the lane a little crooked and a little slow, but it hit three pins!

“Nice job!” Erin said.

McCall gave me a high five. I grinned so hard I thought my cheeks would break. This wasn’t so bad after all! I kept bowling and had a great time for the rest of the party.

Now I try not to worry about what I’ll look like or what other people will think when I try new things. Sometimes it’s hard not to feel awkward, but take my advice—don’t let worrying or being scared stop you from doing something new. There’s a good chance you’ll love it! I’m still not a very good bowler, but I have fun learning. Maybe someday I’ll even get a strike! ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.



“It matters not the size or the quantity but the effort we put forth to develop the talents and abilities we have received.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Youth of the Noble Birthright,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 74.