



The Girl with the Beautiful Smile

I was scared, but I found a secret weapon to overcome my fear.

By Michelle Glauser

For months I had prepared with my piano teacher for this day. I was participating in Achievement in Music, an annual competition that rates music students on all sorts of things—from knowledge of theory to the dynamics in a memorized piece. Finally the day had come and along with it my nervousness.

The scariest part of the competition involved performing pieces for judges. I knew my pieces, but my hands shook as I played.

The dreaded performance was over. I could relax because I just had to give my report on a composer. I found the correct area and waited in a line before two doors. Curiously, I looked in the door on the left. A friendly teacher encouraged students as they nervously entered and

became acquainted. She obviously wanted to put them at ease.

Then I looked in the room on the right. There was another piano teacher, an older one, but she had a stern look that made my hands turn cold. The more I saw her interact with the students, the more scared I felt. All I could think was, “I hope I get the first judge.”

I read my report over and over. When I got to the front of the line, I hoped the person on the left would finish first. To my dismay, the student on the right started walking to the door. There was no way I could go in there. Then the thought came to me, “Just put on your biggest smile.”

I walked in with a bounce in my step and the biggest smile I’d ever shown. Like they say, by acting happy, you feel happy. I beamed as I shook the judge’s hand. Then I read

my report in a clear voice, pausing now and then to smile at her. At the end of my report, I thanked her for her time. She did not seem scary anymore. As I walked out of the room, I felt relieved and happy.

A few months later I listened as my piano teacher read the comments from the judges. On the last comment she said, “Wow, you really impressed this judge. She wrote, ‘Michelle, the girl with the beautiful smile.’” I didn’t have to ask her who wrote that.

Changing my attitude helped me do my best. Whenever I have something difficult to do, instead of showing myself to be unwilling, I decide to make it fulfilling and enjoyable. I know that my attitude affects my experiences. By persevering with a good attitude, I have learned to enjoy my challenges. **NE**