



## They've Seen me Cross

Today, I would like to tell you a story, I know that I am living the process, but that is just why I'm telling it. I would like to write the ending in the future.

This year has brought a lot of changes, and during April I started another one; since days back I wasn't feeling good with myself, I would look myself in the mirror and I swear I felt like crying. One day, I was looking for pants and I would find my size, clothes were no longer fitting, my self-esteem was going down, something was not right.

After a lot of thought, on April 16th to be exact, I got up my courage (and I say it like that, convinced that I got up my courage because when we face ourselves is when we need the most strength) and I wrote my nutritionist saying I needed a change.

When I began the process with Fabi I had 31.6 % of body fat, and I highlight this fact because it was the one that shocked me the most, and I think my nutritionist too. The upcoming step was to begin a diet and an exercise routine.

I confess that the first days it was hard to modify the portions and quantities, but most of all, exercising. At the moment, I was 22 and I didn't practice any physical activity, my biggest effort had been to ride a bike against the wind in Liberia, from there, everything has been only about the intentions of practicing something, but nothing else.

I started from zero, I started walking, nevertheless, the weeks passed and I started to feel the need of doing something else, during the journey I realized I can make a change and that there were things I've always wanted to do but I didn't have the courage to.

Two weeks ago, I started training with my University's volleyball team. I'm barely starting and I still have a lot to learn and improve, but the fact of having space and an activity motivates me to give my best, If I was granted a chance, I want to give

my best.

And on the other hand, much more recently I got into my head the feeling for running, I had never done it before, but since now I feel much more confident about myself I decided to try. My roommate is helping me train, It's been only three days and is a slow process, but it is making me feel happy to see that I am capable of doing things that for years would not even cross my mind, and when I would think about it, my only answer would be "never, I can't do it".

What has happened since the beginning of this process? It turns out I've already lost a percentage of body fat, now I'm at 29.3%; and among other things, I must confess I sleep way better than before, anxiety peaks that were so frequent before have reduced a lot and this has helped me realize that I am capable of a lot of things, If I decide to and I work on it, but in the end, I am capable of accomplishing it.

What's next? Everything, the process with my nutritionist is not over yet, I'm still working on it, I still have improvements to do in volleyball, I would love to tell you someday that I have a match and that I will be also participating in a race, so I will keep working on that, and of course, University is still there, an important part of my effort and motivation is there.

By the way, I realized that by being locked up in monotony I was leaving things on the side that I enjoyed, so I picked up reading, dedicating time for conversations and I have done an effort to invest in living.

Why do I tell all of this? Because in my journey I have known a lot of people and we frequently keep what we think and feel for ourselves because we don't think we are capable, because fears often beat us, because sometimes what other people think has a lot of power. I say it like this because, just as I have risen when I've fallen, I know a lot of other people can do it as well. I tell this because I realize I am not alone in the world and even when anxiety tries to convince me of the opposite when I raise my eyes and find words of support and love If I find someone who is having the same need I want to give my love and support back.

I am not alone in the world, you are not alone in the world, we are together; we walk, we fall and we rise back up.

Don't give up

Don't give up, you are still on time  
of reaching and start all over,  
accept your shadows, Bury your fears,  
releasing burdens, retake your flight.

Don't give up that life is that,  
continuing the journey,  
chasing your dreams,  
unblocking time,

releasing burdens and uncovering the sky.  
Don't give up, please don't yield,  
even if the cold burns,  
even if the fear bites,  
even if the sun hides and the wind silences,  
there is still fire in your soul,  
there is still life in your dreams,  
because life is yours and also the desire is yours,  
because you've wanted it and because I love you.  
Wine and love exist, it's true  
because there is no wound time can't heal,  
opening doors and removing locks,  
abandoning the walls that protected you.  
Living life and accepting the challenge,  
recovering laughter, rehearse singing,  
lowering the guard and extending hands,  
deploying your wings and trying again,  
celebrating life and retaking the skies,  
Don't give up, please don't yield,  
even if the cold burns,  
even if fear bites,  
even if the sun sets and the wind silences,  
there is still fire in your soul,  
there is still life in your dreams,  
because every day is a start,  
because this is the best time and the best moment,  
because you are not alone,  
because I love you.  
- Mario Benedetti.