

Paths Lesson 16 - We Are All Unique

Objectives:

- To understand that everyone is different and this makes everyone special
- To identify individual differences
- To read a story in which a unique person works hard in order to succeed.

What does 'individual differences' mean?

Individual differences are what make all of us unique and special. There are no two people who are exactly alike. We are different sizes, different colours, have different likes and dislikes and come from different places and different backgrounds.

Task 1:

Write 3 things that are unique about you.
They can be about the way you look, how
you do things, what you like to do, your
family or something else.



Task 2:

To complete the autobiography sheet.

An autobiography is an account of a person's life written by that person.

By comparing answers with people in your family you can see that even though we have many things in common, each of us has something that makes us unique.

1. Do you think it's a good thing that we are all unique?
2. What problems might we run into if everyone were the same?
3. What might be easier if everyone were the same?

Read this story about a unique woman whose name is Wilma Rudolph.

'The Dream of Winning'

Can you imagine what it would be like to lose your ability to walk? This is what happened to champion Wilma Rudolph when she was 4 years old. She got pneumonia, scarlet fever and polio at the same time. She was very sick. She nearly died. Her left leg became so weak that she couldn't walk. Some children would pout and cry if they couldn't walk. Even though she was forced to sit in a chair, she still tried to play games with her friends.



Wilma had hope and that kept her going. She was determined that someday, somehow, she would walk again.

Fortunately for Wilma, her family loved her very much. Both her parents worked full-time with only one day off each week. On that day, Wilma's mother would drive her to the doctor, 45 miles away. The doctor would massage Wilma's leg, to make it grow stronger.

Wilma had 22 brothers and sisters. Her mother taught 3 of them how to massage Wilma's leg. They massaged it 4 times a day.

Very slowly Wilma became stronger. When she was 6, she got a pair of special shoes. She could finally stand up and hop around on one leg. Finally, at the age of 11, Wilma was able to walk and run on her own. Her hope had helped her through.

Once Wilma was able to move on her own, she just couldn't be stopped. She started playing basketball and soon made the team! She was tall and thin, she could race down the court and shoot baskets better than anyone else. In her second year, she scored 803 points in 25 games! It was an astonishing feat.

Wilma was even better when she took to the athletic sport of running. She had a way of running that was pure poetry. Her body seemed to flow. She seemed to run faster than any woman alive.

Wilma wanted to prove she was the best. At the age of 16 she entered the Olympics. Her relay team won a third place bronze medal. But when she ran by herself in the 200-metre dash, she didn't do well at all.

Wilma spent the next 4 years training. Every day she forced herself to run and run and then run some more. When the 1960 Olympics were held in Rome, Wilma was ready. She entered all the track events. She ended up winning 3 gold medals, a new world record.

The world fell in love with Wilma. In Russia, people called her 'Queen of the Olympics'. In France, she was called 'The Gazelle'. In Italy, they named her 'The Black Pearl'.

Just 16 years before, the fastest woman on earth had been unable to walk. The world will never forget the triumph of Wilma Rudolph.

Wilma Rudolph, became the head of the Wilma Rudolph Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is to help young people dream and achieve in sports, as well as to build character.



Questions

1. What obstacles did Wilma have to overcome to become the world's fastest woman?
2. Wilma was unique. She had a severe disability, but it didn't keep her from hoping and dreaming. Did Wilma just hope and dream, or did she also try really hard, even when things looked pretty bad?
3. When Wilma won at the Olympics, she had many people to thank. Who do you think were the most important people?