

# Dare to Do What You Fear

*Lixia Zhou*

When I came to America one year ago, I couldn't speak English, and I didn't understand what people were saying. I was scared to answer the phone. I felt my English was so bad, and I did not have the courage to face the difficulty. So I chose to avoid speaking English. I often refused invitations. I stayed at home and lived an isolated life. I was like a lost lamb. I felt lonely and defeated.

In April last year, with the help of my family, I started going to school. I remember I couldn't answer any of the questions. I was nervous when I took the entrance test. I did not understand the teacher. I was afraid to chat with my classmates. I felt that most of my classmates' English was better than mine. Looking at them chat with each other, I envied them and hated myself.

## Find Ways to Practice!

**Here are some more things** Lixia Zhou did to improve her English. Put a check in the box if it's a strategy you can try. Add your own strategies at the bottom.

- She tried to memorize 20 words every day.
- She wrote in her diary.
- She watched English-language movies.
- She faced the mirror and repeated English words.
- She started speaking in the class and with other people.
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I knew that I must change my life. So, I made a plan for myself. Every day I got up at 7AM and read an English book out loud. I used the dictionary if I couldn't understand some of the new words. I wrote the new words down in my notebook.

Gradually, I could understand what the teacher said, and I could speak with people more easily. I felt my English was progressing. Because of a conflict

with my schedule, I could only go to class one day each week.

So I asked

my teacher to give me homework and I would finish it by myself. I felt my confidence was growing. I wasn't scared to speak English anymore. To practice my English, my friend asked if I would teach Yoga. I felt the joy of success when my Yoga students told me that they enjoyed my class. This strengthened my confidence. A couple of weeks later, I passed the test to enter the advanced English class. I knew that I would face new and difficult challenges. I must be brave to face them.

There is a saying, "Dare to do what you fear. It is good medicine for restoring confidence." This is good advice. It worked for me. I won't avoid the difficult things anymore. I will become useful, and able to help and serve English-speaking people.

*Lixia Zhou, originally from China, is an ESL Student at the Amsterdam Literacy Zone in Amsterdam, NY.*



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