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**Topic: “Focus on where you want to go instead of where you have been”**

The clock ticks, the sun comes up and goes down again- two nights spent in the rafters of my submerged home. Huge waves thrashing far away from the shore. Our lives, with another swell, could possibly be no more. The clock ticks, the moment comes, three men finally arrive to rescue us. I climb down from the roof famished, cold, soaking wet, ready to forget the destruction associated with Hurricane Dorian.

But I can't think clearly, and my mind is void of the future. Without a home, what do we do now? Where do we go? What will I wear tomorrow? Everything is gone. I wish not to focus on where I had been or the devastation I witnessed. The better questions are where do I want to go, what do I want to do, and who do I want to be? In life, sometimes it's hard not to focus on the past, especially traumatic situations. They replay over and over in our minds. Sometimes we wish we had made better decisions. We wish we had avoided some storms in our lives. But I've learned that difficult times are blessings in disguise because they force us to evaluate those tough questions.

After surviving the hurricane in 2019 and reflecting on where I want to go, the sunny clime of Singapore and the graceful mountains of Greece seem delightful on my quest to see the world. Figuratively and more importantly, though, I simply want to take daily walks on life's beach-counting all my blessings and leaving a positive trail that others may follow. I desire to help others the way people from around the world reached out to help us after the storm. I, therefore, live each day more cognizant of those less fortunate than I am. Difficult times do often set us on a new path.

After Hurricane Dorian, I reluctantly entered a new school and my family built a new house. Initially, I didn't want to have to make new friends and I wanted my room, decorated with coral and sage, to be the same. But change was good. I made great new friends and designed my dream bedroom. I've learned that we can always envision and plan for a better tomorrow. We ought to use disappointments and difficult experiences like hurricanes, other natural disasters and even this pandemic to shape us into stronger, more creative and resilient individuals.

My father serves as my living example of focus and determination. He refuses to allow past setbacks to deter him from his goals and he works feverishly everyday to provide for us. No matter his accomplishments, he always strives for more. The same, therefore, is true for past successes. We should not continue to bask in yesterday's glory because as Babe Ruth once said, "Yesterday's home runs won't win today's games." I can not become complacent in my studies after a few good grades or stop helping after a few good deeds. While the mountain top is a glorious place to be, there are many mountains to climb. The clock ticks, each moment counts, and each day I must work to achieve my goals.

I'm not focused on where I've been, instead where I want to go.