

SECOND PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROSE

Little Things Like That, We Did for Each Other

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Testimony: Engelina Billauer

Little actions, big impacts. From courage to survival. Engelina Billauer shares her testimony on how she survived the Holocaust with her sister and girlfriends. They helped each other to survive by doing little things for one another. Little things that led to bigger things. Small actions that led to survival.

Engelina and her sister, Frieda, stayed together through all the camps they went to. While moving from camp to camp, Engelina and Frieda met three other girls who would become as close as family. In Stutthof concentration camp, Nazis required women to have a female examination. As the youngest in the group, Engelina's girlfriends made sure to look out for her. When the line shortened, one of her girlfriends pretended to panic and pushed her out of line. "Little things like that, we did for each other," Engelina notes in her video testimony. I can tell how grateful Engelina is for such a small action. At the time, she probably thought her girlfriend was crazy. But looking back, she admires her courage. Not only was she grateful for survival and liberation, but also for the small actions the girlfriends did for each other.

At the time, a little thing was a big thing. In all of the camps, Nazis were searching for reasons to kill. If the girls were caught, they would be taken away and killed. That's why even a small act of help was extremely courageous. They put their lives on the line to help each other. Little

things can also turn out to be good, big things. Like when a guard gave an unknown hand gesture to the girls and one of her girlfriends spoke up. Thinking the girls were crazy, the guard spared their lives. Was it lucky? No. I say courageous. These small deeds taught me the importance of family and togetherness. Without her girlfriends, Engelina would never have been able to survive. Little groups, and big impacts.

During the COVID-19 virus, I have learned to appreciate everything. Little things like food on the table and my family being together. Yes, I will eventually look back and be grateful. But for now, I appreciate every small step along the way: school reopening, sports reopening, the vaccine, all of it. Not only do I appreciate little actions, but I learned to do them for others. From complimenting my friends on their new artwork to a genuine smile, I realize little things are contagious. Although these small deeds are not considered as courageous as they were during the Holocaust, they can still have a long-lasting impact on someone.

No matter the size of the action, I am grateful. From Engelina Billauer's Holocaust experience to our ongoing COVID-19 experience, every small deed helps us through. Little groups, long lasting impacts. Engelina's girlfriends, my family. Little actions take courage, and big things take courage. From the push out of line to the mask I wear, they all matter. It is safe to say, a little thing is a big thing.