



K Formula to Success

• Maria Merlinda P. Mariado

“Success is the sum of small efforts being repeated day in and day out.” – Robert Collier

Just like the hundreds and thousands of small efforts invested by Krystel Mari Q. Lomibao, this young achiever made it to the peak of success.

When I was assigned to write a feature article about Krystel, I was hesitant at first despite knowing her so well. Because I know that this sweet, kind, Karylle-look alike girl is so reserved. She might decline or ignore my invitation for an interview. How did I know her? I was more like her “personal secretary” rather than a tutor for several years. I watched how she bloomed from a shy, homebody bookworm little girl to a confidently beautiful math wizard.

I congratulated her mom when she posted Krystel’s winnings during the Guangdong - Hongkong- Macao- Greater Bay Area Mathematical Olympiad Big Bay Bei Final Round last March 21. I said to myself, “Wow!, now she was acclaimed internationally”. And there’s more when she won again in the Philippines international Mathematical Olympiad (PhilMO) last April 11, 2021.

Did you review a lot? How is competing in the “new normal” I asked. “Honestly, I didn’t have time to review that much. The organization sent mock test papers for the participants and I answered. Then I passed!” she delightfully answered.

Did you find any advantage in competing by purely online? I asked again. “Well, since I was in elementary, I have this competitive edge that makes me want to strive to be the best. Because of the “new normal” I am free from any fuss of preparations, of traveling and feeling uneasy upon seeing other competitors, of waiting impatiently

for the result at the venue. Instead, I just fully focus on reviewing. You are to confine yourself in the four walls of your room, with full concentration. Yet sometimes, I wish I would be back to the old way. That would make my life so much easier and relaxed and virtually stress-free. But I have to embrace change, view things fairly, and accept challenges,” she replied.

Being an honor student definitely has its ups and downs. Krystel’s life is not an exemption. From her primary years, she keeps on being one of La Marea Academy’s pride and glory not only as a Math expert but also in any other competition that she joined. I saw her tears of struggles during a week preparation before she won a poem recital in CSI Lucao Atrium when she was in Grade 2. I heard her chuckles of disbelief after winning a Spelling Bee in CSI



Stadia during Children’s Congress on why did they still include the words

“telephone” and “anniversary”. For her, those are very “elementary”, yet she was only Grade 4 then.

Any secrets on how you maintained to be on top? was my next question.

“I don’t have any secrets. I just read and never stop learning new things. Being an honor student since Prep, somehow, made me be determined and competitive. These traits tend to come out in various things in my life especially in sports and music. I play volleyball and I am a fan of Broadway. I need to stay determined and keep my mind clear during practice and competitions. If you want to win, you can’t give up. The same thing applies with academics. In any competition, I can’t allow myself to give up. I hate feeling like I’ve failed. It is like, when I have tasted victory, I cannot entertain failure in my life. But I can accept it after giving my best shots. I do taste a few bitter pangs of losing. My mom taught me to work hard in everything I do. She always said that it’s a waste of talent if you will be lazy and satisfied with second best. So, I try to work hard on all my work. Because with being an honor student comes pride. I have pride in things I do,” she confessed.

Krystel has just finished Grade 11 with High Honors in La Marea Academy. It has been years since I last visited her room. But I bet her wall of fame has more frames of achievements, of medals with different shapes, sizes and colors of bronze, silver and gold with her face beaming with radiant smiles. Yet I knew too that to be on top of those mountains of success, she had experienced a few falls. Twice did she fall as second best, when she was in Prep and in Grade 7. Those were my “lazy” years, she jokingly said.

She did not pursue though she passed the Philippine Science High School Qualifying Exam before she graduated Valedictorian in Grade 6, Why? I asked “I just wanted to test my mathematical ability. Besides, I don’t want to be away from my family”, she dreamily answered. When she passed again the qualifying test for Senior High School in La Salle and Ateneo de Manila, her parents discouraged her to take the offer. Her safety is more important than prestige and glory, her dad said.

How do you foresee tomorrow?

I care about my future. To get to my dreams, I need to maintain my good grades. Being an honor student helps me open more doors of opportunities. I want to get somewhere in my life so I am passionate in all my endeavors. So, until then, I have to focus on doing the best I can to set myself up to get to my future faster. Some people don’t see that far into their future. I do and I want to get there in the most efficient way I can.

Indeed, Krystel’s smashing successes did not happen overnight. As I watch her milestones, I can say that her hardwork plus patience and perseverance multiplied by an exceptional vision make up her formula success.

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