

Aesop's "The Tortoise and the Hare," but from the Perspective of a Timorous Spectator

It was the day of the race and every animal in the surrounding area had caught a sense of the showdown taking place. The tortoise challenged the hare to a race, which most of the animals thought was ridiculous. Timmy, a tortoise himself, was one of those who were apprehensive about the race. *I don't believe someone like me could ever beat a creature as fast as a hare. The challenge is too impossible*, he thought to himself.

Timmy was small and still fragile. Only a child, he had a lot of growing and learning still to do. This seemed to affect Timmy, especially when he was with other animals his age. Foxes were nimble, he was held back by his clunky shell. Deers were big and strong, yet he was no bigger than a small human's fist. Timmy's mother often reassured him his size was not an indicator of his strength. "Timothy the Tortoise," she started, calling him by his full name to emphasize the importance of her words. "Stop putting yourself down based on what you cannot control. What you see as weaknesses are really your strengths because... guess what?" Timmy did not know what his mom was trying to tell him. Reluctantly, he answered with a short, "What?" She gave him a big smile. "No one else has them."

Timmy always listened to what his mother had to say, but he couldn't comprehend her message. On the morning of the big race, Timmy was especially unconfident. He knew better than anyone a tortoise could not go fast and could not cover distances like a hare could. His mom smirked at him. "What?" he questioned. "It's just, I think Tortoise is going to win this race," she said.

"How could you say that? Hare is much faster than Tortoise. The goal of the race is to finish first, after all."

"I have a feeling."

Curious, just like their neighbors were, Timmy and his mother made their way to where the race would take place. When they arrived, Timmy was shocked by how many animals were there to witness the race. It seemed as though every creature in the vicinity had crawled, flown, or swam to provide a full audience for the competitors. Timmy excused himself through tails and feathers and fur as he tried to get as close to the front as he could. He made out Hare, Tortoise, and Fox at the start of the course. Fox pointed the runners through each bend of the course, which he explained would end where it started. Once the Hare and the Tortoise took their places, the crowd hushed and focused their full attention on the pair. Timmy held his breath as Fox signaled the race to commence. With a quick nod of his nose, the Tortoise and the Hare were off. Well, the Hare was off and the Tortoise unhurriedly moved his feet forward, one by one. As soon as it started, the Hare met all expectations; he flew past the tortoise and gained a substantial lead. Timmy was almost embarrassed for Tortoise. Even with the distance between them, Tortoise continued to move forward. Animals around Timmy started to notice the gap, pointing and laughing at the unwavering tortoise.

Far off, Timmy could see Hare come to a halt. The Hare turned around, took in his lead, and waved to his audience. The animals cheered for Hare, which he enjoyed very much. Hare took one more look at Tortoise, who was closer to Timmy than him, and decided to take a break on the side of the course. "He knows he will win even with a nap in the middle," said a chipmunk close to Timmy. The small tortoise was surprised. *How daring he is*, Timmy thought. Every animal's attention quickly shifted to the Tortoise, who had never stopped going. He still had a long way to go before he reached the napping hare.

As time passed, the Tortoise remained steady in his pace, for it was all he could do. To Timmy's surprised, the Tortoise managed to close the gap between him and Hare. He watched in

anticipation as Tortoise gently passed Hare, who remained fast asleep. The animals waited for the Hare to awaken and steal victory as they expected him to. However, the moment never came. Timmy, and the whole crowd, witnessed Tortoise come around, slowly, and cross the finish line first. Astonished, Timmy found his mother in the crowd. “Mom! Mom! Did you see what happened?” he said. “Yes, Timmy. I told you,” she responded. “Tortoise used his strengths to win the race. Slowly and steadily.” After the race, Timmy was proud to be a tortoise. No matter how small or slow he was, he knew now what he could accomplish by just being himself.

The end.