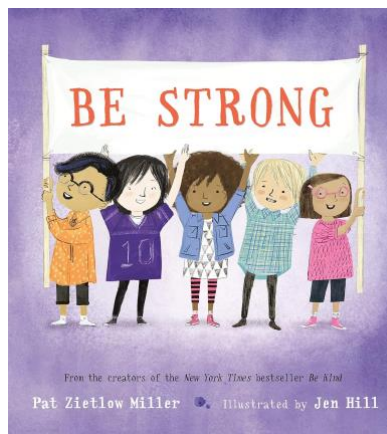


Second Reaction: Be Strong – A Young Girl's Inspirational Journey.

Miller, Pat Zietlow. *Be Strong*. Roaring Brook Press, 2021.

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"Be Strong" written by Pat Zietlow Miller and illustrated by Jen Hill serves as an inspiring tale for young readers, aimed at enhancing their self-efficacy and encouraging them to seek and offer assistance as needed. The story revolves around Tanisha, a young girl who faces challenges such as navigating a school gym climbing wall due to her muscle limitations, struggling to lift her backpack, and occasionally being unable to perform simple tasks. Despite her difficulties, her family consistently encourages her to be resilient. They challenge her perception that she lacks strength.

In this journey, Tanisha's family plays a pivotal role. Her father underscores the significance of presence and participation, her mother encourages speaking up for oneself, and her grandmother instills the virtue of perseverance. These perspectives empower Tanisha to

develop strength and collaborate with others. Furthermore, I consider this resource valuable for instilling in children the belief that they should not perceive themselves as limited or incapable when they encounter tasks they cannot perform.

I found "Be Strong" to be a valuable resource, particularly for students with varying abilities. It provides insight into the concept of strength, sparking discussions about assisting individuals facing physical limitations, advocating for one's needs, not giving up, and appreciating small accomplishments. However, a critique could be that if someone cannot perform certain tasks, like rock climbing, they may feel discouraged.

Engaging young readers with this book offers valuable learning opportunities. One can include activities such as creating lists of tasks they can and cannot perform, playing games like "Pick Up the Stick" to illustrate varying abilities, and encouraging research into skills that require practice. This prompts students to think critically about their abilities and helps them realize the different abilities of each individual.

Furthermore, for parents, this book emerges as a valuable asset in fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion among young children. For instance, it offers various interpretations of strength, emphasizing that strong individuals not only show care and provide assistance but may also express their emotions, including crying at times. Moreover, it encourages kids to value tiny steps. Parents can foster meaningful discussions with their children by asking questions like, 'What would you do if you feel you lack the strength to face challenges alone?' These conversations can help children connect with the book's themes, enhancing the effectiveness of the reading experience.

What I found most appealing in this book is its inclusion of children from various cultural backgrounds in the illustrations. This book brings together kids with different abilities and shows children from various racial backgrounds. Thus, the illustration appeals to kids from all cultures. The book also talks about homeless and differently-abled people. It helps young readers understand the different parts of society. Specifically, it paints a positive picture of homeless people and suggests that Tanisha's neighborhood is supportive of them. Additionally, it portrays a child who is determined to befriend those left alone during school activities, like lunchtime and is actively engaged in helping homeless individuals. I believe this book would be a valuable addition to a read-aloud selection aimed at promoting equitable and culturally responsive book lists.

"Be Strong" is an encouraging book for young readers. It empowers them to find their voices, offer assistance, seek help when necessary, and persevere. The diverse perspectives of family members add depth to the theme of strength, allowing children to explore different dimensions of the concept such as being strong.

About the Author

Muna Sapkota is a second-year Ph.D. student and a graduate instructor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Purdue University. Her research focuses on social justice in education and intercultural competencies within instructional settings. Before beginning her doctoral studies at Purdue, she taught English and Social Studies courses for K-12 and undergraduate students in Nepal for eight years.