



# SELF-CONTROL

...determines destiny.™



Photo by Allen Fraser.



## FROM HOMESICK TO HISTORY MAKER

### IMAGINE

...being 1,200 miles away from your home and family. You feel so homesick that you want to give up on your big dream! That's what happened to Gabby.

When Gabby Douglas was three, her sister taught her to do her first cartwheel. Finally, at age six, her mom signed her up for her first gymnastics class. Gabby caught on quickly.

When she started, Gabby spent 6 hours at the gym every week. That soon grew to 20 hours every week. She used self-control to stay focused in the gym. By age 8, she was a Virginia state gymnastics champion.

As the years passed, she realized that there was more to training than just the tricks and flips. She says, "Sometimes the biggest obstacle was my own attitude." She talks about the importance of her attitude. She says her negative attitudes hold her back at times. She believes that her attitude can shape who she is. It also shapes who she will become.

When Gabby was 14 years old, she was on the junior national team. She won first place in the uneven bars event. Gabby then knew she was ready for the Olympics! So she left her home in Virginia. She moved 1,200 miles away to Iowa. There, she lived with a caring host family.

Training got more intense with her new coach. He taught her to set goals each week. She also learned to visualize those goals. Then she would practice over and over until she accomplished them. She learned the importance of staying focused in training. She knew that self-control in training would affect her routines in competitions.

Even though she had a family to live with, it was really hard for her to be away from home. Gabby says, "I would double over and clutch my knees to try and make the missing

stop. I wanted to quit and go with [my family]. I was tired of training, fed up with gymnastics."

But her older brother encouraged her to stick with her dreams. He told her to be the best she could be, no matter what. This helped give her an extra push to keep going. She now had more focus and self-control than she had before.

Just one year later, Gabby went to the Olympics. There, she became the first African-American to win a gold medal in the Olympic individual all-around competition. She was also the first female gymnast to win both team and individual gold medals in the same Olympics.

Gabby kept training with discipline after the 2012 Olympics. She had a new goal of going to the 2016 Olympics. "I'm being very consistent, knowing that every turn matters. It's not about the next turn and tomorrow. It's about today and this turn," she says. Gabby uses self-control to work toward her new goals. Just like Gabby, you can have self-control to help overcome your struggles and become a hero in your lifestory.

Visit [Mind-Cue.com](http://Mind-Cue.com) for free resources and enjoy more inspiring lifestories, videos and more to become a hero in your lifestory.

### QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING

1. What evidence is there that Gabby had self-control? When was her self-control challenged?
2. Why do you think Gabby was driven to become an Olympic gymnast? What are you driven to do?
3. What can you learn from Gabby's lifestory? What specifically will you do to improve your self-control?