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The story “Sometimes a Dream Needs a Push” by Walter Dean Myers tells how a father’s car crash leaves his son’s legs permanently damaged. Jim, the father, had been a professional basketball player and had hoped his son, Chris, would become one as well. Despite his dashed hopes, his goals shift and he finds a new way to fulfill his dream. This story reveals how people can move forward after a setback, but often need to re-adjust their goals and have some kind of ‘push’ as well.

After Chris was in a life changing accident that resulted in his no longer being able to walk, Jim isolated himself, feeling guilty and as though his son’s disability was his fault: “ ‘Whenever he sees you in the wheelchair he wants to put it out of his mind.’ Jim became an absent member of the family, and barely spoke to his son thereafter. Because of this, he was no longer able to influence his son or encourage him to continue playing basketball.

Chris, left on his own, decided to continue playing basketball anyway. He did not want to push his father or engage in any conversations that his father might not want to have. However, his mother did ask his dad, ““Jim, have you actually seen wheelchair games before?”. This question may have sparked his decision to get involved. The next day he called the coach and asked to attend practice. At practice, “Dad took four long steps over to it [a wheelchair], sat down, and wheeled himself back onto the floor… He tried to turn his chair back toward the basket, and it spun all the way around. For a moment he looked absolutely lost…” His looking lost shows he has still not yet reclaimed his dream. However, as Jim worked with his son and the rest of the team, he was able to understand how difficult it was for his son to play. He began to see possiblities. He even told the team “I think we can” when they considered their chances of beating the rival team. This moment had tremendous power. In using the word “we”, he included his son, and made himself part of the team.

Once he was able to push aside his guilt, selfishness, and disappointment, he realized that “there was no way he could play as well as me in a chair,” he became more considerate. If the father hadn’t engaged with his son at basketball practice and voiced his ideas and opinions, he still would have been blaming himself and he would have still been selfish by continuing to isolate himself. This connects to how if we are not connected with current events and do not participate in striving for change in the world, things will stay the way they are, and we will not be able to make an impact.