

## **Try Anyway – I Learnt This From A Pea**

(Original)

*Allison Jo-ann Campbell*

*(Age 21, Jamaica)*

*The University of the West Indies*

“I’m wasting food.” – that was my initial thought towards one of my very first school projects. The task had been simple enough. All I had been required to do was to take a Red kidney pea and grow it within half a plastic bottle using tissue paper instead of soil. Red kidney peas were what we used to cook my family’s ‘Sunday dinner’ (as is the usual tradition in Jamaican households) and even though we were never short of kidney peas, I thought it was a great misuse of the little seed.

How was it supposed to grow without soil?

Nonetheless, I had been obedient in the carrying out of my assignment and I did as I had been instructed. I hadn’t believed that the pea would grow, so when the first signs of growth began, I was fascinated.

The roots began to develop first, followed closely by the shoot, until finally, subsequent to diligent care on my end, the seed was no more and within the small plastic container, where first laid a ‘waste’ (according to my six year old self), a young plant had developed.

It is as I have grown and matured, that I’ve truly begun to recognize and appreciate the lessons that seed taught me.

I had held a small seed in my hand and because the conditions weren’t what I was familiar with, before I had even started the assignment, I’d deemed it a failure.

How many times as humans do we look at a seed that we hold – this seed being our potential, our capabilities, what we have within – and then look around us and because we believe the environment isn’t ideal or the resources aren’t enough, think – “It’ll be a waste.”?

How many dreams have died like this?

In many of the Jamaican ghettos, people live impoverished and in despair. They live as slaves – some mental slaves (with a warped sense of duty and loyalty), some physical slaves (under a rule of guns and gangs) – to the surroundings and the better option seems

to be to give up. Rather the best option seems to be that one doesn't even start. Dreams die every day, worse yet – people stop dreaming.

But what if we recalled what happened with the pea more often?

During the initial stages of growth, the seedling had been relying on its own food storage, but with its maturation came leaves and with these leaves it would utilize a new way of making food – photosynthesis.

With unlikely resources, as a seed and as a young plant – the pea used what it had.

I believe that if more and more people used what they had and if they did so in a way that wasn't to the detriment of others – after learning about what they are capable of, developing those talents and skills and stop allowing their dreams to become limited by their circumstances – then there'd be more persons who are fulfilled and who lead happier lives.

A situation may seem improbable – think from the perspective of an inexperienced six year old trying to grow a pea plant using tissue instead of soil.

But that doesn't mean it's as impossible as it seems – the seed grew into a young plant.

And often, the unsuspecting can yield delightful results – for all my efforts, I was rewarded with another seed.