

## Ellie Makes the Team

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the story. Then put the events of the story in the correct sequence.

Ellie was an outstanding gymnast. She could do backflips and handstands; she could swing herself over and over the uneven parallel bars, and she landed on her feet every time. The trouble was that she knew it. When she tried out for the gymnastics team, she put on a perfect performance. Everyone else trying out was impressed – and intimidated. “See if you can do that!” Ellie said, as she came off the mat. The other girls told her she was amazing. The coach just pressed his lips together, and thought hard.

The next week, when the list was posted announcing who had made the team, Ellie’s name wasn’t on it. She turns to the girls standing around her, who were also looking at the list. “I’m better than all of you!” she exclaimed. “This doesn’t make any sense!”

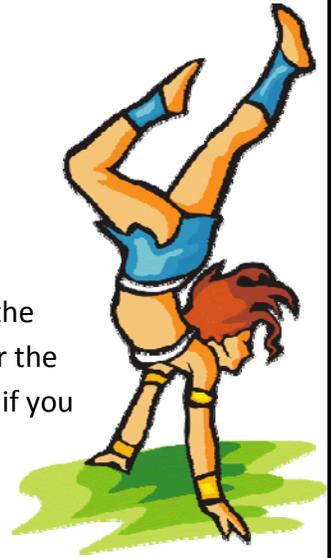
She went to see the coach. He asked her to sit down, and then explained, “You are extremely talented, but your attitude is terrible.”

“What do you mean?” Ellie demanded. “I have the attitude of a winner. I know I am the best, and I prove it, every time.”

“Making the gymnastics team isn’t just about gymnastics,” the coach explained. “It’s also about being on a team. You can’t be part of a team if you don’t recognize how much everyone has to contribute, and encourage them to do it.”

That night Ellie complained to her parents. Her mother was outraged that her daughter had not made the team. But her father suggested that maybe the coach had a point. Ellie went upstairs in a huff and slammed the door to her room. That night, her parents had a big argument. Ellie couldn’t sleep. She laid upstairs, listening to them. She purposely did not think about what the coach had said. She would show him. The school team would probably lose that year, and it would be the coach’s fault, for not picking Ellie.

But as much as she tried, Ellie couldn’t bear to stay away from the gym. She practiced every day, careful to stay out of the team’s way. At first she felt very satisfied to see the girls on the team struggling. But then it started to bother her for a different reason. One day, after watching Kim fall off the uneven parallel bars again and again, Ellie approached her, and explained what Kim should do differently in order to solve her problem. Kim did as Ellie suggested, and experienced immediate improvement. Ellie felt good inside as she went back to her own solitary – and lonely – practicing. She didn’t notice the coach looking on from across the room, or how the coach watched Ellie afterwards, as Ellie struggled to push herself to do something new.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Sequence of Events**

Over the next few weeks, if Ellie had an opportunity to help one of the other girls, she did. She no longer thought about joining the team. She just worked hard, day after day, for hours, pushing herself harder and harder. The gymnastics team competed again and again, and each time the girls did a little bit better. Once they actually won the meet!

“We couldn’t have done this without Ellie’s help,” the girls said to one another in the locker room.

The following year, Ellie tried out for the gymnastics team again. This time, when the girls told her she did a good job, she just thanked them, and went to sit back down. When the coach posted the list of who had made the team, Ellie approached it with apprehension. She was sure that the coach much hate her, and that she had blown any chance of making the team the year before. But there was her name, on the list. Her hard work had paid off – but not the hard work she had put in learning complicated gymnastic moves. When she showed up for practice the next day, and the coach smiled at her, she knew that it was the hard work of becoming a better team player that was responsible for her success.

\_\_\_\_\_ The coach tells Ellie her attitude is terrible.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie coaches Kim.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie doesn’t make the team.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie can’t stay away from the gym.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie works very hard on her own to improve.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie shows off at gymnastics tryouts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie enjoys watching the girls on the team struggle.

\_\_\_\_\_ When Ellie tries out for the team, she is modest.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie’s parents argue about what the coach said.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ellie makes the team.

