

## Blog 49 Discover China Trip Week (part two)



On the third day, we rode a bus up to a small mountain in Taian for a big day at the Adventure Challenge Park. At the park were a number of different “challenges” both mental and physical. But you can consider the following as one of my biggest challenges and also as one of my biggest accomplishments, overcoming quite an explicitly bothersome fear of mine.



Right after my harness was fastened to the thick safety rope, all my group mates ran over to slap my helmet, wishing me luck and “positively” encouraging me to “Stay alive!” One deep breath, and I was climbing

the steps on the pole thinking how bad can this be? Everyone else did it, right? One bar by another, I climbed, bubbling with energy, towards the top, towards the sky. At first, watching other people complete the activity, I didn't think it would cause me so much fear. By the time I reached the top bar, I finally got the nerve to look down, which was, as always, a horrible decision. The confidence I had in the beginning felt like a tin-foil shield at the time, failing when I needed it most. The floor was ever so far away and everyone became nothing but large sesame seeds on the ground and suddenly, the four meter height of the pole felt like twenty meters. I could feel my heart trying to escape out of its cell bars of a ribcage. Nervous waves swept through my body, shaking my legs and causing the pole to wobble fiercely. With one pull of my muscle, I raised my left leg and in a split second, I was sitting on my heels on the ten centimeter wide circular platform. I knew that the case would most likely be the quicker the better, but it was hard since I couldn't obscure the fear of falling to my death, even if I knew the safety rope would catch me. My cold hands were clutching the edge of the platform and all I needed to do was release my grip and place my hands on my knees. But even just that one movement had me gasping for air in a pool of fear and hesitation, with the famous question: What IF?! floating all around me. Just then, our PE teacher Ms. Weatherly came around the corner and started shouting words of encouragement up at me. I remember watching her down on the ground, hands cupped around her mouth, shouting: "Don't let your fear control you. Stand up and take control of your fear. Trust me, in the end when you finally do, it will truly feel amazing!" Inhale, exhale. I took a couple sturdy, deep breaths and steadied the now swaying pole and my trembling heart. Trying ever so hard not to look at the ground, I stood with my sweaty hands resting on my trembling knees. Not very far away, just above my head was the black bar that I had to jump up and grab onto. "Don't think that much, Angela, just jump," came from a voice down below. 1, 2, 3, jump... I smiled to myself as the crowd went wild.