

Remember to learn from life's 'unfair' experiences

I had just dropped my husband off at the airport. On the way home, my two toddlers and I stopped for groceries.

I got the boys out of the car, made sure the doors were locked, and began to put my keys into my pocket. Somehow (because I was six months pregnant?) I missed the pocket and the keys tumbled to the ground and slid through a grate.

There I was, stranded in a grocery store parking lot in the middle of winter with two young children. Who on earth put a grate in the parking lot next to my car? It wasn't fair!

But then, life isn't fair.

I've been reminded of that as I've watched the Olympics.

Even before they began, there was the controversy over Emmanuel Sandhu. Despite a terrific performance in the Canadian Skating Championships, the rules wouldn't allow him to go to the Olympics. Not fair.

As the Games began, I felt the agony of the Canadian snowboarder who was a good bet for a medal until a \$2 screw let go and his board fell apart in the middle of a great run. It just wasn't fair.

Then there was the flu bug which decimated the Canadian village, particularly hampering figure skaters, curlers, and speedskaters. It especially wasn't fair to Elvis Stojko, who was already struggling with injuries.

Did he really need the flu, too?

I felt for Brian Stemmler, who nearly died in a horrifying crash several years ago. He had a gold medal in his grasp until he caught a small rut and went rolling past a gate. Surely he deserved to win this one!

I could go on to talk about the waxing problems of the cross-country skiers, who,



That's Life

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like the postal service, were not stopped by rain, sleet, snow, or—there wasn't any hail, was there?

I could talk about the unfairness of the ice dance judging, Ulf Samuelsson's visa problems, Miriam Bedard's struggle with health problems.... So many things happened that weren't fair.

It seems to me the problem is that whenever there is a winner, there are going to be a number of other people

who did not win. And some of them will say, "It isn't fair."

And it may well not be fair.

Something like the Olympics puts the whole process into a glass bowl where everyone can watch and either groan with dismay or cheer in elation. But it happens in real life, too. When one person gets that long-desired promotion, it may be there was someone else who thought he or she deserved it more. When one child is placed on the rep team, another child is not. When one contractor gets the contract to repair that house, someone else misses out. When I buy my car from one salesperson, other salespeople lose that commission.

And the one who "wins" isn't

always the hardest working or the most deserving. Sometimes life isn't fair.

Watching the athletes has been interesting to me. Some are satisfied with knowing they did the best they could, using each "failure" as a learning opportunity to improve next time. A few blame themselves for not working hard enough, not wanting it enough, doing foolish things....

And there are those who put the blame for their failures onto others—coaches, bosses, team-mates, co-workers, parents—whoever they can find to accuse.

In the long run, I wonder if a positive attitude to "losing" may be more important than achieving. When you

think about it, for every "winner", in sport or in day-to-day life, there are hundreds, even thousands of "losers."

Let's face it. When things go wrong, it can be awfully easy for us to complain about it and to either blame someone else or to come down hard on ourselves. But it's more important, and healthier, to ask, "What can I learn from this?" before we blurt out, "It isn't fair!"

Did I learn from my experience with the keys? You bet I did. After a friend's husband drove us home and broke into our house, I decided never again to be caught in a similar situation. I always carry two sets of keys—one in my purse and one in my pocket.