abandonment and poverty are battlefields which have their heroes--obscure heroes who are at times greater than illustrious heroes." We just have to look around us and I am sure we can all think of a countless number of people who meet life head on despite all odds. There are so many people around us living in poverty or dealing with illnesses and disabilities. There are people where circumstances have dealt them an unlucky hand such as becoming unemployed, being a single parent, etc. Yet they have the courage to get on with life and they do it with a smile on their face and lead life to its fullest. That to me is mind over matter.

One remarkable example is a friend of mine who I met in University. In fact I met her on the first day of classes in front of our Economics lecture hall. Both being first year students and a bit nervous we just happened to start up a conversation and it really was the beginning of a truly great friendship. Almost twenty years later we still talk almost every day and she has been an inspiration to me from the moment I met her. Why? you may ask. One thing that I have not mentioned is that my friend suffers from a rare genetic disorder. She was born with Morquio Syndrome which is an inherited error in carbohydrate metabolism that manifests itself through symptoms such as short stature, skeletal and joint abnormalities and also other complications that can include impaired hearing. But let me tell you that these physical limitations have never stopped her from possessing a personality that is larger than life. For three years we spent almost every day together attending lectures, organising study groups, going out for films or dinner etc. What amazed me was her ability to make everyone around her feel good about themselves. Her problems never seemed to take precedence and she always had the patience to listen to everyone else's day to day dilemma or crisis.

Without knowing it, she has taught me to look at life positively --- whatever problems we have, they are all relative. I am not belittling the difficulties that are thrown our way --- we all have our crosses to bear but that should not stop us from getting up and confronting our problems head on. My friend has always been there for me and even when she is in and out of hospitals, she has time to find out how we are doing and if there is anything she can do to help. That to me is the sign of a truly amazing person.

So this whole mind over matter is not about Yuri Gellar bending spoons or anything of the sort. It is about the people around us who do not let adversity defeat their spirit but overcome it through sheer determination and will power. That to me is mind over matter...

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