Name: Darijo Anušić

Gender: Male

Age: 33

Country: Croatia

Name of the EBU national member processing the entry:

Croatian Blind Union

Number of words in the national language: 1071

**Making the right move with Braille**

*“Take the key you need and keep thinking.”*

That was the thought that came to my head while I was walking from the beach to the rehabilitation camp for the blind on a hot summer day. I was walking on a paved pathway next to the pine trees, feeling the scent of sea, while breathing in the fresh air. A group of cheerful tourists passed me by. If any of them could read my mind, they would think that my head is ringing with one of the many sentences from the motivational lecture. But that was not the case…

*“Do not reject the challenges!”*

Just few minutes before, while I was putting my towel into the backpack, Luka, a friend I met on one of the chess tournaments, came to me. After a short conversation, reminiscing about the last chess tournament, he asked if I wanted to solve an interesting and short study. I said yes, so he described the positions of white and black figures. I visualized it and asked:

* Is it rummy?
* No. The white makes the move and wins – said Luka.
* Are you sure the white can win? It doesn’t look like that…-
* Yes, yes, just keep thinking. –

Walking towards the hostel with a help of the white cane, tapping a little – sliding a little, I visualized the board again and thought about the right moves. I was sure that first two moves were good, but I couldn’t figure out the third one. Coming to the reception, I said hello, but no one answered…

*“If you have the will, you will find a way.”*

The lobby of the hostel was empty. I slowly went behind the desk and carefully felt my way through the keys. My roommate went to the city, so we agreed that he leaves the key at the reception because we didn’t know who will return first. I took one of the keys and ran my finger over the three signs printed in Braille. Number 12, that is the key I needed.

*“Every effort is worthwhile, though it may not be instant or visible.”*

As I was climbing the stairs, my attention was drawn to the pendant swinging on the forefinger of my left hand. My thoughts shortly turned to recent past. Just few years ago, I would not have needed the white cane and I would have reached the key quickly and directly – with one glance. Now, when the circumstances have changed, I found the key in more difficult, but innovative way.

Emotionally, it was very hard for me when I started learning Braille. Although teacher praised me for learning well and quickly, I still felt bitter and disappointed for having to start from the beginning. I ran my fingers over some kind of dots and spelled as if I was back in the first grade. I was reading very slowly and it made me think that it was useless.

Being acquainted with audio books and screen reader software for computer and mobile phone, I sighed with relief and concluded that I won’t need Braille at all. However, certain life circumstances made me think differently and soon I realized that the letter is very useful and sometimes a very efficient replacement even for the most recent technologies.

*“Be simple and practical, do not complicate needlessly.”*

Climbing step by step, my smartphone bounced in the pocket of my shorts and tapped my thigh – as if it was trying to poke me and ask: “What about me? What about all the knowledge and discoveries of the new age that are built into me?

No, I don’t need you this time. Although you have a microprocessor capable of performing couple of thousands mathematical operations in a second, only three sings in Braille were enough to leave you aside. It takes too long to unlock the screen and start the app for text recognition. It would be an unnecessary complication.

*“Check and make sure, do not rush.”*

Too relaxed and confident, I came to the door I wanted to open. Those were the door of my room – room number 12. All I had to do was find the lock. But then, it was as if some LED diode turned on in my mind… How many times have you thought you were making the right move, which later proved to be bad? Are those the right door? Can you open them with the key you have? I ran my finger over the door plate. Braille signs gave me a negative answer. It was a room number 13. I had to go down the corridor…

*“Even inexplicable coincidences can lead us to the solution.”*

I finally got into my room and threw my backpack in the corner. I wanted to throw myself on the bed, but I accidentally grazed the open magazine “Chess” printed in Braille that was lying on the table. With the fingers of my right hand I started to slide from the upper corner towards the bottom. I read the title “Selected studies”, randomly chose the study number 5 and read the position of white and black figures. I could not believe it! It was the same formation Luka gave me! I was surprised. Simultaneously filled with disbelief and positive shock.

*“I know, it is hard to be patient.”*

I moved my finger further, to the section with solutions. Although I knew that I have to put in more patience for solving it, I was overcome by euphoria so I could not resist reading the third – last move that unrolls the ball. I read it and said one long: “Oooooooh…!” The move was so obvious and logical – just like Braille.

*“Let us be brave and creative. That way we will selflessly make the right move for everyone else as well.”*

I lay down on the bed and thought. I was aware of the fact that a certain combination of dots led me to the other one, winning combination in the field I am interested in. One braille cell can contain the total of 64 different signs (two to the sixth). That is the number of fields on the chessboard! If we divide that number with the basis, that is number 2, we will get the total number of figures at the beginning of the chess fight.

I thought about the man who created Braille. Did he study chess too? I do not know…But he must have had the talent for logic and creativity. He wisely restricted the space to only six dots in two columns in order to make it more intelligible. He showed his originality, which then opened the door for the blind people to literature, foreign languages, music, chess… to spaces we want to explore in order to build and develop both personally and collectively. That is the art of making the right moves and Louis Braille made one – for all of us!