

The thing that I think about the most, what I daydream about constantly, what I love with all my heart, is writing. Words have fascinated me for as long as I can remember. This sounds weird: fascinated by words? It is what words, together, can become. What words can do when they make a sentence, paragraph, page, chapter, a book, what a word can say when it stands alone. Devastating. My 'life's task' calling is to be a writer. Putting words together to form memories within someone else's mind makes me ecstatically joyful.

I knew from a very young age that I would be a teacher, but there was also a part of that yearned for the imaginative side of art and writing. I would spend hours recreating drawings of my favorite characters and then began to make new ones of my own. Soon I began to come up with stories, writing short pieces and create characters to go along with them; being both author and illustrator. I created an office in a spare room and this was my creative sanctuary. Quite a few years passed, and as with most seniors in high school, I applied to many colleges and universities.

Both the toughest and easiest decision awaited me with one acceptance letter. I had to decline acceptance to Walt Disney Art School in Florida. Because the tuition was outrageous and my parents were not supportive of anything that did not benefit them, my life felt like it was turned inside out. I ended up attending a community college for a brief time but had to drop because it was expected of me to get a job and start helping to pay bills (remember those self-centered parents?). After working many years in fast food, I was able to escape the clutches of the 'parents' and begin a life on my own. This led to meeting my now wife and beginning a wonderful family.

Continuing to support my family on a less than substantial income was not easy, but I did this in order to make sure my wife could finish her degree and become a teacher. Once she graduated and began teaching, my turn came to go back to school. Finishing a bachelors degree in secondary education with an English major and History minor in two and a half years was no easy task. I wanted to begin teaching as soon as possible. Everything was in my favor for a change, and I was extremely enjoying the glow.

For seven years I truly and deeply loved teaching seventh and eighth grade English. The last two years being in administration have not been so wonderful. I missed the classroom. This past year I returned to the classroom, still seventh and eighth grade English along with high school yearbook. Teaching students the writing process, how to ‘show and not tell’ details in their writing, helped to to rekindle my passion for writing. I feel that taking the steps to become an English teacher and trying to instill the love for writing that I have in my students has been a huge step.

I have learned that teaching writing the way I do has an emotional release for me; giving my students some of the best parts of me. While doing this, I feel that my life’s task has emerged even more, showing me that my true love, my heart’s roots, are not in teaching writing, but in writing itself. I know that if I did not have to hold a career in order to live (the almighty dollar) I would spend my life reading and writing. Believing this as a positive example of what I have learned, the negative side of this experience is that my heart aches a little knowing that something I have been doing for nine years, teaching and being in education, is not my true life’s task.

Even though a little bit of my heart aches for this, I am truly passionate about writing, and anticipate every step of my journey ahead. The rest of my journey is going to be filled with an amusement park full of roller coasters: ups and downs.

What now? I cannot say that I will quit my career as a teacher and begin the life of the of a new and unpublished writer. What I will say is that my dedication and intent to write has been rekindled. Not with a spark per se, but with a full blown torch setting the woodpile ablaze. There is a type of renewal that comes with an awakening of this magnitude. My life up until now was not any where near stale or stagnant, but a fresh new perspective has taken over my body; mind and soul.

Imagine walking through the darkest room you can imagine: no lights, no windows, shadows non existent, for they cannot exist without a glimmer of light. Then, the very next moment you turn a corner (only knowing you've turned a corner because you have been gliding along the walls the entire time for strength and support) and are struck with glorious light, sunshine cascading through every crack and crevasse. The sense of purpose, sensations of warmth, tenderness and caring enveloping your entire being, is a feeling everyone should have.

This is the feeling of realization. The understanding that I truly comprehend what it is that I am meant to accomplish in life. For me, this realized dream does not end with these elaborate feelings and sensations. Every word creates another shudder of hope through my skin, a chill that reminds me of what it truly means to feel with words. Realization is more than just a word to mean 'an understanding'. It is letting go of the wall in the dark and walking on my own toward the light, so entirely immersed in the awaiting possibilities, craving what that light has in

store, knowing that the unknown awaits within the glaring beaming glow and not caring that it is unknown because nothing is better than this 'realization'.

Once the light found me, there was no shutting it off. It is a burning torch that will forever light the path to what makes me...me.