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The Creativity Journey

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The Creativity Journey

Michael Nuzzo

Our plush couch is trying to swallow me. Its soft warmth is trying to trick my entire body into falling asleep. Any other time I would have given into this pleasure and let the world quietly slip away for an hour or two, but not tonight. I did not want to be here. Please don't ask me a question... Don't move, she might see me... If I don't say anything, maybe she'll give up... "Well," Uh-oh, quick, think of something! "What did the hare do?" my mom asked. "Um, uh, well he, uh," I stuttered. The room was dead quiet. I looked for an escape from this tortuous moment. The large windows which covered our entire wall, where perfect for daydreaming but would offer no such luxury this late at night. Instead of gazing into the large blue sky, or determining if those were cows or hay bales on the horizon, all I could see was the reflection of my mother staring at me, waiting for an answer. My mom has been trying to help me write this paper about The Tortoise and The Hare. I hadn't started it, and, yes, it's due tomorrow. She didn't understand that I just can't write. I always freeze. Every time I try to put my thoughts on paper, it is as if some evil villain locks the door that lets my creativity flow.

I always have a difficult time writing. Ever since I can remember, the emptiness of a blank page begs the impossible. To me, trying to write is no different than trying to solve a math problem without being given the problem statement. I am scared to write because I don't want to answer incorrectly. But still, I want to write, I want to be successful. Will I be doomed to continually stare at my blank computer screen as the clock ticks, or can I break this cycle?

Our dim office was quiet. Not the kind of quiet you hear when you are nervous, but the quiet that comes with the relaxation after a perfectly completed task. The clock ticked quietly as a delicious aroma filled the air. My fingers were lightly touching the heavily used keyboard and my cheeks hurt from the joyous smile on my face. I looked at the small clock sitting on the windowsill to my left and thought to myself, "five-thirty, just in time for dinner." I had

just finished writing my first poems. My eyes scanned each one meticulously for mistakes, even though I had already checked three times. “Spring”, “Summer”, “Fall”, and “Winter” were my “down to earth” poems. Each described with physical elements, such as temperature or the delightful smell of food. But there is one poem I can’t wait to show my teacher, “Space”. “Space is wide, space is deep, darkness all around...” this beginning of my poem shows how elementary it is, but that doesn’t matter, the page isn’t blank.

These poems were the first complete pieces I had written by myself. Creative writing, as they called it, was not easy for me. I could quickly spit out labs, research papers, or even the occasional bibliography because all I had to do was regurgitate learned information. Anytime when I had to think about feelings or, heaven forbid, make up my own story, I froze. My mom bought three or four different writing textbooks to help me improve my writing, but I was science and math oriented, according to society, it was expected that I would have trouble writing, and I fit the bill perfectly. When I finished these few short poems, I immediately called my mom into the room to display my first literary art. “I wrote them all by myself!” I proudly stated. She gave me a hug and told me how good they were. Her affirmation to my “masterpieces” sparked some confidence in me. I broke the cycle.

From then on, my writing became increasingly better. I wrote a ten page paper about the summer we demolished, moved, and rebuilt our barn; of course, this actually happened, so it was not too challenging. More impressively, I wrote a piece about the book, *The Giver*. The assignment was to take the open ending of this book and finish the story. I knew something had changed in my writing because I actually enjoyed this assignment. I actually enjoyed creative writing! I believe my reading habits had something to do with that.

Ever since I was little I loved to read. Like, absolutely LOVED to read. In my mind, I would become the characters the books were about. I was an extra friend that adventured to magical lands in the *Magic Tree House*, or a soldier marching into battle ready for the civil war. I was with the Pevensie children when they met Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, I was Digory Kirke venturing through early Narnia with Polly Plumber and my crazy uncle, I was Alex Rider.

Alex Rider was a super cool, sixteen year-old spy for the British

Secret Intelligence Service, MI6. Anthony Horowitz had redefined my identity by projecting me into his “Alex Rider” books. I don’t remember how I obtained the first book, but it didn’t matter, as soon as I read the first chapter of Stormbreaker, I was hooked. I devoured all nine of Alex’s missions as fast as I could. I felt the confusion when the Russian, Yassen, killed his loving uncle. I felt the adrenaline when Alex was chased by a shark into an underwater cave where he discovered the secret entrance to the fortress. I felt the depression that came with knowing his father used to be an assassin. And when tears stained his face with the death of his closest friend, my heart was broken. The Alex Rider series is one of the most memorable I’d ever read. He had the gadgets, he had the wit, and he had the adventurous life a young boy, like myself, dreamed of.

As I grew older and life became busier, I fell away from the books that inspired me to write creatively. Life told me that reading takes too much time and isn’t beneficial in the “real world”. As a result, I stopped writing. Just a couple of days ago I was assigned the book *The Teacher Who Couldn’t Read*. I put it off like it was a chore, I don’t have time to read, but once I read the first two chapters, I once more became that little boy who couldn’t put his books down.

I used to have a difficult time writing, but now, the emptiness of a blank page no longer begs the impossible, rather, it proposes a challenge. The challenge to let my creativity flow, to defeat the villain and take back the key to my imagination. I am no longer scared to write because I know there is no incorrect answer. I write, I read, and that little boy rejoices to be set free on every new adventure.