

Narrative Essay

“Good afternoon class! Please clear off your desk and get out a pen or pencil.” It was only after I had run across the building that I heard this phrase, feared by so many. It is this phrase that is so often used to doom students to weekends filled with nothing but chores, misery and the inevitable grounding. After my teacher spoke, I got the feeling that a family of frogs had just taken up residence in my throat and stomach. I knew what she was about to make us do and I also knew that it meant one more failed attempt to succeed at something that was unattainable—a perfect score on the AP Literature multiple choice practice test.

As she began to explain what this horrible quiz would entail, I began to reminisce on past English class experiences. What came to mind was how I had always enjoyed English and had even planned on making it my major in college. My mind then wandered to all the pleasant teacher I used to have and how much I used to look forward to coming to class. Oh, I longed for the days when I used to write and understand English with ease and grace. I wished for those times when all of my papers—essays or quizzes—would be returned with As and Bs. Those, indeed, were the days!

When my teacher laid that evil piece of paper on my desk, I was jerked back to reality. As I sat in a somewhat tumultuous staring contest with that thing, I began to loath the entire class and everything that it stood for. However, as time progressed, complete and utter despair washed over me. I had been trying so hard on these quizzes with very minimal results. It was so disappointing and frustrating to try to persistently just to find that my best wasn't good enough. Even my most valiant efforts still didn't produce the results I wanted so badly.

After pondering all this for some time, realized I had never experienced this terrible, helpless feeling. Previously, school had always been an easy thing for me and I never struggled for any of the grades I received. However, it now occurred to me that school required hard work. Working at these multiple choice questions was the only to accomplish my ultimate goal—perfection. So I worked through the quiz question by question and line by line. That ten question quiz, which I interpreted to be Chinese, took me the whole hour to complete. Right as the bell was sounding I turned it in with a renewed sense of hope. When it was finally returned, I was

surprised by the results. After all of my hard work, effort and thought, I saw the grade which I had earned—a 40 percent.

“What? But I worked so hard on this! How can that be?” I screamed to myself. I didn’t Understand! I mean, in every fable and rhyme I heard as a child, the message was always “Work hard to accomplish your goals.” I sat there in disbelief for awhile simply wondering over and over “Why?” Why did I do so badly? Why can’t I understand this? I left class that day andry at myself, at the teacher, and again at that stupid practice test. What was the point in taking it? I had already taken millions of practice tests and the AP exams were quickly approaching. I was running out of time and I had only improved my score, on average, by two points! Two measly points! I mean, what good was that going to do me on the AP exam?

When I went home that day, I again thought about all those nursery rhymes, fables and catchy inspirational phrases that I had so often heard throughout my life. After much time and consideration, I realized that striving for perfection was not and never would be realistic. After recalling various memories in my life, it occurred to me that as long as I could remember I wanted to be perfect. I wanted the best grades, be involved in the best extra-curriculars and do the best things. I now realized that I never was perfect and was never going to be perfect because there was no such thing. It didn’t matter that I had failed every single practice test because, I mean heck, the tests weren’t actually worth that much in my overall grade in the class. What mattered was that I improved my score with my efforts.

This concept that perfection was unattainable also helped improve my quality of life because I wasn’t so obsessed about my grades and whether or not everyone thought I was a perfect person. Instead of doing things to make myself look perfect or to impress others, I started to do things because I wanted to. This improved my personal relationships because I became more relaxed and easy going. I wasn’t competing with any of my friends to be the best.

Even though I never achieved a perfect score or a perfect personality, I gained so much more. I attained a life filled with imperfections, strong character, and good grades. Sure, it is not a blemish free existence, but I’ve grown to realize that it is the flaws in my life that make it ideal. So I guess in a sense, I finally reached the perfection I had always wanted.