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My educational journey

2008. This was the time in my life where I was introduced to a new land and a new language. I was 4 and I had been brought to the United States for the first time. Being in a new place was made hard by the fact that I did not comprehend the language or the culture. From then on I was placed in front of books and dictionaries. It felt as though I was climbing a mountain of endless words, with endless synonyms and antonyms. It was tough learning even a sliver of English, yet as a child I could never give up because I knew what it meant to give up. It meant endless disappointment in the eyes of my father. For a long period of time my father had that look on his face because I simply couldn't grasp the English language.

2010. Everyday for 2 years I was haunted by that same look. It was like looking into the eyes the word disappointment itself. The only time I could relax was when I talked to my mother through video call and played cheap copies of Mario games together. My mother would beat every level of those games and leave me in awe of her abilities. Yet even with all those happy moments I could never escape the despair that I had derived from not being able to learn. I soon became really depressed and I had stopped caring about my education. I had completely given and I had taken it upon myself to let everyone know. I had developed an attitude and behavioural patterns that were very dangerous to both myself and my peers in school.

I began to get into fights at school. One of which got me detention, which I skipped. I had also begun to attend something called a fight club which would take place in the school bathroom after school was over. Lying to my parents had become a daily norm as I was constantly lying about where I was, how I got injured, and why they were getting called by the school. I had begun to not eat whenever my dad presented me with a book. I wouldn't eat at all for days at a time simply torture myself. I would never pay attention at school or do homework of any sort. I had also begun to indulge in dangerous activity and adulterous activity. One of my neighbours was a girl about my age. She and I had begun to do things children shouldn't do. And in the mix of things I also managed to almost kill myself.

The place that I lived in had a backyard which was used to store items for construction and I decided to kick a piece of sheet metal on a very windy day. I almost lost my leg but I also almost lost my life. My father was about to leave that day and luckily he was still at the exit when I was dragging myself across the floor of the backyard, towards the front yard, screaming for him to help me. I had lost so much blood that I was going in and out of consciousness as I was being taken to the hospital in the back of a taxi. Nearly a week had gone by before I was released from the hospital and my father was left alone by child protective services.

I was very quickly becoming a danger to myself. And everybody knew it, they had all tried to warn me about it. Of course I have been a stubborn child since before coming to New York. I kept doing what was putting my life at risk. Eventually I was put into counselling at school, this had become the beginning of a turning point in my life. Although I didn't believe in it at first, I had slowly begun to go back to being my old self. Yet it still was not enough because my education was still stagnant. I still felt useless and dumb for all the same reasons.

Of course all of this stopped when my mother had finally been able to come to America. As soon as she came into the house she put a book and a dictionary on a table and told me to not get up from there until I understood a sentence. At first I was disappointed and angry that the person who had consoled me all those years was now forcing me into doing what had tortured me. However, as she stood menacingly behind, ready to bang my head against the table, I looked back at her face and realised that she wasn't disappointed. Instead she was worried, I took that chance and read until midnight. When I woke up and lifted my head from in between the pages of the book my mother was still there waiting for me. Unlike my fathers approach to my learning, my mothers worked great because I had begun to understand what the other kids were saying at my school. Still I was already in 1st grade so I was still below average.

Due to my below average reading abilities I was placed in a special English class that taught people who originally spoke Spanish. This, however, did not last long as I was out of that class by the next year and I could read and write in English and in Spanish by 2nd grade. My mother who had been with me throughout the entire process was ecstatic. The constant reading and writing that I had gone through had finally shown an inkling of a reward. This had propelled into reading religiously for 3 years after those events and had kept me reading as a hobby for my entire education henceforth. Resulting in my rise from being below average, to reading at the top of my grade in every single phase in my education journey from then on. And it also resulted in a complete 180 in my behavioural patterns, I wasn't completely back to my old self due to certain improvements, however, it was better that way.