

Joseph Meza

ENG 1101

Unit 1: Education Narrative

Word Count: 1141

### The Letter

I used to have a gambling addiction. I would never commit to and complete an assignment in a single sitting regardless if it was easy or hard. I always figured that I'd have time to do it *later* and usually procrastinate these assignments seeing how far I can wait until I HAD to do it and it paid off. I'd gamble on the chance that the teacher would extend the due date whether it'd be because of other students needing more time or because they were feeling nice that day. Worst of all I was proud of it, often asking my friends why they completed their work so early when they could save it for later. This horrible habit eventually led to my downfall.

My procrastination didn't just apply to schoolwork either, I was a lazy person, plain and simple. I never thought of the consequences of this and even ignored warnings. "I would rather have a lazy student than a dumb one because at least one of them tries to do their work" said my second-grade teacher. Of course, I thought this would never apply to me as it was elementary school and I was doing pretty well, even going as far as to think why people would put stuff off for later when they could complete it right away. I wished 14-year-old me would've kept that same mindset, but the upbringing of my bad habit could be dated back to elementary. I would always get high scores due to my proficiency in both reading and math and would do well on state tests which bumped me up to accelerated classes. Middle school came around and it was much of the same as I got put into honors classes and didn't need to work that hard for good grades, simply relying on briefing notes and knowing the things I do. On paper, this sounds like a formula for being successful and just naturally smart, that's what I thought at the time and unfortunately, I ran with that and never looked back.

Freshman year hit and it wasn't completely easy, but I kept my habits of understudying and just relying on my general knowledge, and my habits would worsen often leaving my homework until the very last minute and realizing that the teacher gave us a week to do it for a reason, which found me begging friends to send me what they had. Before I knew it, I was getting swamped with work and felt as if I was fighting against the current because of the assignment overload. Then just like that Covid hit and I thought it was my lucky break where I could calmly breeze through everything just like I did before and not have to pay attention once. It was online, how hard could it be? For the first few weeks, I was right, one of my very first assignments was to write about my favorite show. This was heaven for me and I got that comfort that I once had again. Unfortunately, I took it too easy; My teachers began to understand how everything worked and would assign actual assignments. I was too accustomed to the easy-going 5-minute homework's, I just didn't have the energy to keep up with research papers or essays of that sort. I found myself in a downstream once again and had failing grades all over with the worst one being 16%. This was supposed to be the easiest year of my school life and instead, I spent it playing or sleeping during my classes, I didn't even bother to do the work and slowly it overwhelmed me to the point where I had over 50 missing assignments. As you'd expect, my parents soon received a letter that caused me to rethink my future.

I hadn't told anyone about that letter for a while, feeling embarrassed that I had a high chance of repeating a whole school year and as my friends graduate I'd just be left behind. I knew I couldn't

bear the misery of them knowing and for a while I felt isolated. I couldn't rely much on my parents either as they were disappointed in me and felt as if they were the ones to blame for perhaps being too lenient on raising me. For a while I had to live with the memory of my own father discussing with me about dropping out of school altogether and just finding a job that'd help me get by, "It's your life we can only do so much, If you think school isn't for you then just drop out and start looking for a job." Those were his exact words. I felt frustrated, I couldn't be angry at my parents they were right, it's my life and my decisions, I couldn't vent to my friends either after seeing how my parents dealt with it I was scared to see how they'd react. But it was only time before I had to tell them as summer school was approaching, the excuses for not hanging out with them would eventually catch up with me. I felt scared and feared that I'd be pitied upon but I decided to let go of my pride and came clean. I was met with comfort and relief that I was no longer lying. It felt good knowing that they were believing and supportive that I could hopefully make a recovery and eventually see them on the stage. I had to make sure my family saw me walk that stage as well and used that motivation to leave my bad habits behind. I took extra classes even after summer school and spent my junior and senior years making up for my past self's bad habits.

I was only 15 at the time and didn't know how much of an impact this could've had on me mentally so as I spent the extra hours studying in classes and working on assignments my friends hung out I vouched to myself to never let this happen to me again. Looking back on it I found myself at rock bottom with a sliver of hope that I'd make a come back. I saw myself as a failure for letting my parents down and for becoming like this. But now being in college and having made it, I see it as fate giving me a fresh start, and that I overcame it and became a better person from that whole experience. As I finish typing this essay I can proudly say that I'll never let my bad habits catch up to me and as a reminder of what I accomplished I have the letter that haunted me for two years hung up alongside a plaque that I spent even longer attaining.