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NOTE: This essay was written by a student of mine three years ago. The assignment was to write a personal narrative about something that helped you to learn a moral lesson. Also, students were to weave a quote from an Emerson essay into their story. You do not have to write about something this dramatic to do well on this essay.

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Danielle Steele

Personal Narrative: Essay 2

English 1; Section 121

Final Draft; Sept. 22, 2010

Should we follow it?

We all make choices in life: some big, some small. But sometimes by making the small choices you can be just as impacted as by making the bigger ones. This is a story about a night when a small decision of following an ambulance had huge consequences. It reminds of the saying by Ralph Waldo Emerson that I truly believed up until this point: “[Don't be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.](http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/2547.html)” But I would later change my mind.

It was June 14, 2009. It was around 2 am. It was only minutes before our lives would be changed forever. My best friend Jessica, Nicole, and Myself had just left downtown Cedar Rapids. Exhausted from all the dancing we had done and all the laughter we had exchanged. We stopped by the Taco Bell on First Avenue for a bite to eat not wanting the night to end. That was when we first head them, the sirens.

 They were faint at first, I almost hadn’t noticed them over the slurps of our sodas and the crumpling of our food wrappers. Then suddenly the ambulance flew by, light flashing almost blinding. Fast and furious it sped down the off-ramp. I’m not sure whose idea it was, but someone said, “should we follow it?”

 As we headed toward the off-ramp, we gazed across to the other side, the ambulance had come to a stop. It was almost silent now. As we crept by the ambulance we saw it. “Oh my god, is that a body?” whispered Nicole.

 It was a body, face down, crumpled. About a hundred yards from the 7th Street exit. Next to the median was a motorcycle with the back light still lit and the wheel still spinning fast among all the broken glass. Bright light hovered over the body, making it look like day in that spot. We didn’t speak the rest of the way home. We pulled into my driveway, said our goodbyes and smiled, “have a good night.”

 I walked into my house and relieved the babysitter and walked into my son’s room and picked up his tiny body and brought him into my room. I couldn’t sleep after what I had seen. I barely slept that night. Just when I think I fell asleep, I heard “Danielle, I need you!”

 It took a few seconds to figure out that Nicole was standing above me. She was shaking uncontrollably. And then she said it, the thing that would change our lives forever. “Todd died last night!” I didn’t believer her at first. “No, you’re messing with me.”

 I went outside with her and saw the police cars. Everyone was huddled in Nicole’s yard. It took a few hours to figure out the details of what had happened.

 You see, Todd had been with us that night. We were standing outside the nightclub minutes before we heard the siren. We were standing outside the last time we and I saw him.

 When we left, before going to Taco Bell, we drove by his bike, but it wasn’t there. When we saw the crashed motorcycle, it had crossed my mind that it was Todd’s, but the color wasn’t the same. And the biker was going the opposite direction of our home.

 A few days after the funeral, Nicole received news from the detective on the case. According to a cab driver that witnessed the accident, he was following a car the wrong way down the off ramp. The taxi driver had waved to the driver of the car to motion that they were going the wrong direction. Todd being on his bike was unable to see, the car moved and Todd was struck head on. He had died almost instantly,a nd the car that he had been following took off.

 Nicole no longer had a husband, and has become an empty shell of the woman she once was. She tries to be strong for her kids. As for me, I lost someone I had just found 5 years earlier. Todd and his familiar moved across the street and we became friends and neighbors. We got along great and I thought that fate had brought us together as neighbors. Now I think fate moved his family there so I could take care and watch over Nicole as best I can. I remember telling Todd that night how much I loved him, and we talked about our future together as neighbors and friends. So, if you take just one main idea from this narrative, make it be that you should tell the people in your life you love them as much as you can hope to. I’ll use Emerson again, who said, “Give all to love; obey thy heart.” That is a decision that has been a good one for me.