

Remembrance

by Luis Avalos

*While in school I hung with the cools.
Loving to break rules we made ourselves fools.
It was all a shame!
As soon as mom dropped me off at school, I would
become this beautiful mistake.
Little did I know my life would be at stake.
Both my parents were hard working. They could never
know my ways.
I was sly as a fox. An awful feeling churns in my stomach
when I recall my deceiving ways.*

When I was younger I didn't think about my future. I was caught up in a destructive culture. I wanted to drop out of school, so I proposed the idea to my parents. Of course, they found it out

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of the question. I kept at it, telling them that I was not attending class anyway. That was the reality. I had countless truanancies. The parent/teacher conferences were

becoming all too frequent. Finally, I convinced them to enroll me in a home studies program that I eventually abandoned without a care in the world.

The irony of my gained freedom was that it really resulted in feeling like a prison. Sure it was great at first. I got to do as I pleased. But I realized I was trapped in a negative state of mind. Knowing that both my parents worked very hard to support me while I did nothing to contribute began to make me feel like a burden, and a failure. Eventually, an immense longing for independence arose.

I no longer enjoyed my lifestyle. I often felt

sad. My self-esteem was affected greatly. I began to distance myself from everyone. Life was passing me by. My so-called friends were creating independent lives. I was stuck reminiscing about my mistakes. What a waste of a good mind it was.

As time passed, the depression kept growing. I had to swallow my pride on a daily basis. Lies became a way of trying to escape my sadness yet I could not. My guilty conscience remained a painful reminder of my reality. My father began suggesting that I find a job. I actually tried, but my efforts were useless. No one would hire me because of my lack of experience.

My life had been filled with many hardships but when my parents divorced, it was the last straw. I knew I could no longer afford my self pity. I realized that only improving my life could help me understand what had become of me and my family, and in a sense bring us closer than ever. I needed to help myself before it was too late.

From the ashes of my torn down soul arose a new sense of optimism. My parents came to the U.S to better their lives. They must have felt proud to give me a better opportunity in life. To see their son grow up and throw away his opportunities must have been hard to comprehend. I wanted to make them proud again, so I did. I swore to change my destructive behavior and most importantly, value myself and others. I no longer wanted to be the utterly selfish person I had become.

Almost two full years after I quit school, I announced I would be returning. I was back on my feet again with more ambition than ever. My first day back I almost had a nervous breakdown on the bus. Thoughts of failure came up, yet I can proudly say I overcame them. I was reassured by my aspiration for a better life. This filled me with comfort for the remainder of the trip. I stepped into the school and began my assessment testing. I was surprised that my test results were fairly good. I was not as uneducated as I had made myself feel.

Resources from the National College Transition Network

by Cynthia Zafft

While you often hear about the barriers to postsecondary education for non-traditional adult students, the emerging field of *ABE-to-college transition* has some very good news. For example, the expense of college is seen as a major barrier to pursuing further education, yet newer regulations allow part-time students to apply for financial aid. In addition, some adult transition programs have developed community partnerships to generate local scholarships that help support students in their first few courses. These scholarships conserve important federal financial aid dollars for later on in the student's college career when funds tend to run out for students taking a long time to complete a certificate or degree.

The goal of the National College Transition Network (NCTN) is to support ABE staff, programs, professional developers, and states in establishing and strengthening ABE-to-college transition services through technical assistance, professional development, collegial sharing, advocacy, and increased visibility for this critical sector of the adult basic education system. Transition information and resource sharing are central to our free member services, with our Web site providing the perfect vehicle for getting the word out.

For example, one area of particular concern is the level of computer savvy needed by adult students as they begin college. Visit our Web site and "click" on Curriculum Resources. In the section on PC Skills, you will find:

- a link to a brief practitioner's essay on how he developed an *Intro to Computer Literacy* component;
- two student assessment instruments to download; and
- a link to the online tutorial called, *Introductory Computer Literacy for Adults*, to help design lesson plans.

To learn more about the Network and its free member services, just go to www.collegetransition.org and "click" on the leaf in the upper left-hand corner of the screen that says *Join*.

Cynthia Zafft is the coordinator of the National College Transition Network at World Education in Boston, MA.

Remembrance continued

Since I returned to school, my life has improved substantially. I have never looked back. I have great expectations for myself now. I have almost completed my high school diploma and have hopes to continue my studies. I am currently deciding what college I would like to attend. I would like to study something in the field of ecology. Hopefully, everything will go as smoothly for me as I plan, so my dream of creating a better tomorrow lives on forever. Anything

is possible in this life, you just have to live a little and get out there.

*So it was to the loser I said please scram.
I learned to forgive that man.
He thanked me for the helping hand.
It drove me forth to feeling grand.*

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