

# Pasquaney *archives*

---



I love you..... Think about the last time you told your parents, family members, or someone that has always been there for you that you love them..... I am not talking about girl friends that may come and go throughout your life, but those that truly love you unconditionally even at your worst.

When I was ten I was diagnosed with a learning disorder. I had audio processing difficulties that made reading comprehension challenging and paying attention in class extremely difficult. Up until fifth grade I was totally zoned out and had no idea what school was even for. I sat in class mindlessly waiting for recess every day. Going into fifth grade I was worried about what teacher I would get. Most of the teachers that I could get were really nice except for one that I was terrified of: Mr. Sheen. I had seen him supervising recess a few times as a fourth grader. He was a former college offensive lineman and he patrolled the playground with his coaching whistle hanging from his neck and his booming voice ready to put any mischievous kids into place. When I received the letter from school the summer going into fifth grade, I broke down crying; I had gotten Mr. Sheen. I begged and pleaded with my parents to get me switched to another teacher. They stood their ground and said to make the most of it. Looking back on it now I am almost positive that they probably requested him specifically.

Fifth grade was challenging. I could no longer hide in the back of the classroom anymore. I was placed in front of the room with my own desk so there would be no distractions. I hated every second of it. My work was critiqued more than ever before and I couldn't get away with doing a lazy job.

I look back on my education now and am thankful for Mr. Sheen's persistence. In prior grades teachers just let me slide. They didn't care how I did in spelling bees, or if I was writing in print while everyone else was writing in cursive, or if I new the times tables. They made an exception because they figured a kid with my learning disorders couldn't do the same amount of work as everyone else. However, this slack only worked to cripple me more and set me back further in my development.

In middle school I had a better understanding of the importance of school, but I was still very unorganized and slacked off. My advisor, Mr. Mundy, never let up and was always there to push me to be my best. Mr. Mundy would make me meet him after school everyday to put together a schedule for myself and made sure that I had kept a record of all the homework from my classes that I had to do. Some days I wouldn't have my homework all written down and he would wait with me till I got it done. If I did a bad job on some work in his class he would make me re-do it. When he could have just settled his losses and given me an F, he invested lots of time outside of class to make sure I did the work right. Everyday Mr. Mundy sacrificed his own time, and he showed persistence to give me second, third, and fourth chances to better myself.

Life may not give second chances. Those who love us unconditionally are not going to be around forever. Love them for putting up with the stupid things we do, and be prepared to take on the responsibilities they have tried so hard to prepare us for.

This past quarter I wrote a news article on learning disorders, and I conducted interviews pertaining to individual's struggles and what helped them overcome their challenges. A theme that was consistent across

the board was that without the persistent support of parents and good teachers these people would have been lost and cut short of their full potential. Siri Hadland, one of my friends with ADD that I interviewed, said that had she not received the care from those that love her she probably would have been a high school drop out involved with the law at some point. She is now a psychology major at UC Davis.

In high school I fought a lot with my parents much like many teenagers do. I had decent grades but not up to their expectations. On weekends my dad desperately needed my help working on our sixty acre ranch. In my last tree talk I described all the things that I learned from working on the ranch. What I failed to mention was my parents' struggle to even get me to show up for work. I was more invested with hanging out with my friends and playing sports. When not in school, I did not want to work on the weekend. I selfishly failed to realize how much my parents worked for me. I did not think that helping them would simply be my contribution to carrying my weight as a member of the family.

My junior year of high school, after sitting on the bench most of my sophomore year, I finally earned myself a starting position on the varsity basketball team. Half way through the season my dad received a mid-quarter progress report from my teachers. The next day he called the school and told them I wasn't playing basketball anymore. And that was the end of my high school basketball career since the next year I broke my wrist. This was one of many forms of tough love my parents had to give me. I had to learn the consequences of my own actions.

My parents' position was that I had higher responsibilities and priorities. I was not willing to make certain sacrifices and do things I did not want to do. Meanwhile, they were making huge sacrifices for me every single day.

In my senior year of high school, my parents and I were still butting heads. One night I got in a heated argument with my dad, and I ran away from home. I bummed around for a few days sleeping on friends' couches, planning out where I was going to go. Looking back on it now I had no idea where I would go, and the entire situation was very immature and selfish on multiple levels, but I was furious with my dad. I ignored my parents' phone calls; I was done with them. A week later, my cell phone, which was paid for by my parents, rang. I read my little sister's number on the caller id. I answered and she was crying. She told me to come home, she needed me. I had been so selfish that I failed to realize that I had a service and responsibility to be a good big brother. My sister loved me and my anger and stubbornness blinded my own ability to love others.

In the spring of my senior year of high school, I woke one night to my mother screaming in joy that I was accepted into UC Davis. UC Davis was my first choice, but I doubted that I would get in. The uphill battle that my parents went through to ignite an aggressive drive in me towards my college application process had paid off.

But the thing is, getting into college was not supposed to be their battle, it was mine. All the tough love and late night screaming matches, they all benefited me in the long run. It is clear that even though I was such a big punk, their unconditional love stayed strong even through the hard times.

Now in college and living on my own, I am recognizing how foolish I was. Two years ago in my tree talk I talked about how working on becoming independent can be very beneficial when you leave home. As soon as I started living on my own I was struck with the harsh reality of how much I depend on my parents. I can't even really say that I live on my own because my parents help me pay for a lot of expenses. My mother has a saying,

“When the going gets tough, the tough call their mommies” . I can’t even explain how many times, much to my father’s chagrin, my mother has bailed me out, helping make important appointments and teaching me to be financially responsible.

This winter I took off a quarter from school. My grades were average at best and I had not chosen a major yet. If I was not going to take school seriously, I felt like it was time to save my parents some money and see what it was like to join the work force. I found a job preparing a library for a renovation and the pay according to my calculations would have set me up to pay my own rent and possibly even help me buy my first car. The deal with my parents was that as long as I was not enrolled in school I would be paying all my expenses. The job was scheduled to start on January 5th. The project was to be done on a state library, so the contracts and paper work were not signed until a month after the scheduled start time. I was scheduled to return to school for the next quarter, so I had already lost a month’s worth of pay. I went into serious debt on my rent, waiting for my first paycheck. As soon as I covered by debts, I then had to cover the next month’s upcoming rent. I was waking up at six every morning, working eight-hour days and a few overtime days, and learning the meaning of living from paycheck to paycheck. The work was challenging. I was way more qualified than my boss, and I was working with juiced up construction guys who were ready to kick my butt because they couldn’t take a joke from a “college kid” .

I returned to school in the spring, declared a major and got straight A’s.

The point is that there are so many things that you take for granted when you live at home. You work so hard and devote yourself to getting away from the strict parenting that when it finally happens you are struck by the realization of all the things that they do for you. Jack Reigeluth is now out in the world on his own and the other day he said, “Remember how embarrassed we used to be of our parents as kids? How stupid is that? My dad is so cool: he has a car, a cell phone, a house. I have none of those things now.”

Life takes a lot of hard work, nothing is free. Appreciate those who help you with that work, they make a lot of sacrifices that you know nothing about.

When I was a kid my mother would tell me to get the fire in my belly. She said I could have whatever I wanted if I worked hard enough for it. If I went out and earned it.

Do not cripple yourself with excuses. Everyone has their own unique challenges, some may have more than others, but no matter what, do not blind yourself of your full potential. Whether you recognize it or not, there are people in your life who believe in you. Do not shut them out, for you may realize how much you have lost when that support is gone.

Look at the council around you. We have counselors from all across the nation, and some who have come in from China and India. It is hard to justify to our friends and loved ones that we have to leave home to go to New Hampshire for seven weeks to be a camp counsellor. We sit there answering questions like, “Why don’t you be a camp counsellor somewhere closer? Aren’t you a little too old to be a camp counselor.” Doug Camp said the other day, “Camp is a tough sell.” What it comes down to is that we love what we do here. You can’t find the values, friendship, and love anywhere else. I remember those sixteen year olds that welcomed me to the hillside. I remember being so lost my first day on the hillside in 2000. I had no idea what the schedule was like, where to go, and what was expected of me. Ben Schramm, a fifteen year old at the time, found me wandering around after prayers trying to figure out what to do. He called me closer and asked what my name

was and let me cut in front of him to shake Mr. Vinnie's hand and say good night. On the first day of camp I immediately felt welcome and included by older guys who I really looked up to. We come back every year because the community is filled with love and a desire to better itself.

I am sometimes told by campers that this place bores them, that they have already done all the activities. I hope that at some point you realize that this place is not centered around the activities, but rather your own approach to the activities. Ask yourself, "Did I make new friends today in this activity?" If you are not good at baseball, ask yourself, "Did I optimistically give it a try and learn something new?" If you are really good at sailing, ask yourself, "Did I see someone struggling today like I used to when I was younger? Could I maybe have shown them what others once taught me?"

Find those who need the same guidance you once needed. Love each other. The relationships you form here at Camp Pasquaney could last a life time. Be patient with each other. Growing up and going through your teenage years is extremely difficult. You are having new responsibilities thrust upon you, and you are all going through changes at a different rate. Give each other first, second, and third chances.

Let those people who love you know that you appreciate their sacrifices. Accept their love and then spread the love.