

A Passion for Learning

By Gina Iafrate

When we are fortunate enough to be self-motivated and possess in our inner being a passion to learn, we should consider ourselves lucky individuals. Regardless of our interest, the mere fact that we are open minded to the willingness to acquire knowledge is a plus in our life. The great opportunities offered to us today are amazing. Therefore, for any human being who wants to remain illiterate or not take advantage of these possibilities open to all of us is at such a great loss on his or her own part. We can choose to expand our knowledge and enrich our lives. Anyone can search for knowledge of a preferred interest. It is at our finger tips with the click of a mouse. The revolution of our technology today is mind boggling. We can learn so much in the comfort of our homes, or even while in transit, anywhere, besides just the classrooms of our schools. The findings will lure us to dig for more and more. We can make the choice to register the knowledge to expand our brain which in itself can be phenomenal. The accumulation of more information that we retain can only make us brighter and empowered. Unfortunately, I grew up not in the time of the computer era. I have been struggling for few years to bring myself in to today's modern world with everything being computerized. I must admit that for people of my generation, it is not that easy. But I feel it is a necessity for survival. The practice requires more repetition, and a lot of focus. Determination will conquer all. At one time I considered books and schools the best places and sources to acquire knowledge (and they still are) but, today, with the leading commodity of computers. Our sophisticated cell phone, a constant companion for almost everyone, all we need to do is to use it for whatever need.

As far back as I can remember I always searched for what I could learn next. At an early age I recognized that books were precious and full of information for any given interest. Our schools were the places where learning was offered freely for the pupils, with the will to learn, by the teachers they staffed. Our teachers were highly regarded and respected. They also had more authority to implement discipline and severity was accepted. We lived with that, we were eager to do well, to please our teachers, our parents.

Most of all we pleased ourselves and got the benefit of its rewards.

Being a reader, libraries and bookstores were my favorite places. Since I was young I considered these places to be almost, well, sanctuaries. With a longing in my heart to own one of them or be part of these premises that contained books which I considered treasures for discovery, of any subject that got

the best of my curiosity.

Because of all the information available to me through books, I knew that whatever my subject of interest was at that particular point and time in my life, I could conquer it, by simply browsing through the books. I used to regard them as my precious weapons, "my books."

I started out in a small town in Italy, where in those days reading material was mostly limited to your textbooks, and not much else was available. With the assistance of a teacher, and my good parents, I was sent to school in the City where I was able to indulge in enormous bookstores and libraries that had shelves and stacks from floor to ceiling to treat my soul and contend my heart.

With the move to Canada, the first of my possessions to be packed were my books. They made it across the ocean before I did. Once in Canada, and later in various places in North America, I was in my glory. When it came to books it got to be a joke in my family that "books are like an addiction with you and very bad for your pocketbook" since I could spend my whole pay check in a bookstore.

From my collection I taught myself so much, such as bookkeeping, which is not one of my passions but a necessity. Interior décor, which I love, takes me back to being a little girl playing house and truly immersing myself into it with my heart and soul. In the meantime one interest or two was not enough to fulfill my needs. Psychology was always at the back of my mind, people intrigued me and I love people, and needed to understand them, to relate, and to communicate. With excellent teachers and my wonderful books, I was able to understand better and look at life from a different prospective.

Than my love for nature and flowers, and the actual hard work of growing a garden, it all came from my collection of books to magazines, visual pictures, and attending lectures and seminars.

As life moved on my passion for learning stayed with me and the desire for more never left me. When I stumbled in the lectures of philosophy, the learning felt good, and the outlook on life made a big difference. It really made me see all the good things on this earth and appreciate the people on it. It has thought me to Love and only seek for beauty in everything and everyone. Never judge, and never fear. When I was fortunate enough to live and travel to various parts of the world, I always searched for a library close by or, even better, contained on its premises. Going on a cruise, my tranquility is always found in the section of the library - either to treat myself with a good story, or a spiritual or philosophical chapter to soothe my soul.

My conclusion is that good knowledge is the result of good information. Empowered with intelligent understanding one is automatically in possession of a great asset. Once a wealth of wisdom has been accumulated, the obstacles in life are less of a challenge. Therefore, it makes this world a much better

place to be for oneself and for the benefit of others to share.

At this present time my love of learning has never ceased and I continue to pursue it at every opportunity. An old desire, which I recall from my childhood, was to write and be able to do it well in every aspect of the English language. I know it will be a little harder for me, since it is my second language and I have not pursued it for thirty-five years. I am a great believer that where there is a will there is a way. I know my books and research and yes, the great web, are going to help me along the way. I have taken steps to make sure every-night I listen to 1 1/2 hours of beautiful Italian grammar, so that both languages are good music to my ears. Yes, my laptop computer is right by my side, at home, on my travels, everywhere, and has become a part of me.

The wealth in my life is knowledge. All derived from the passion to learn, whether it is hobby or interest. I love it.

My books still my number one toys.

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