

My Story

Tatyana

I thought I would never stay in a committed relationship with school. I thought school was constructed for the type A personality. I thought that if you weren't a prodigy or nerd, school would be a waste of time. This perspective was one I gained through being discriminated against, neglected and assured by others that, "I don't see someone like you graduating". Experiencing this with having little to no self-worth and suffering from existential depression, I felt that I wouldn't have a bright future because education was equivalent to a forever stable life. Having this information, I concluded that a person like myself wouldn't live past eighteen. Tunnel vision blinded me from the possibility at the time to see my potential. At this time when I was consumed by darkness, but a light of opportunity shined down on me showing me a brighter future.

I was a high strong teenager attending Hinkley High School. Although, I was a regular teenager, my habits and interest separated me from the most of my peers. I came from a working-class family with two younger siblings. A skill I had to learn at a young age was to adapt to my environment fairly quickly. This gave me a chameleon affect when dealing with the people around me. So, I was able to make friends quickly, but before I could really establish a relationship, my family and I would move somewhere else. High school changed that pattern because I stayed there all four years. I felt conflicted because I wanted to fit in, but I ran into an odd obstacle. I got along with quite a few people, but I didn't know how to connect with them on a deeper level. Certain things like hanging out at places randomly, behaving and talking in a certain manner, and figuring out how to connect to others was a conundrum. From this period, although I had friends I felt alone and lost. Then I met a woman who change my grim outlook. Her name was Lee Ann Morning.

I was walking my usual route in the hallway and skipping class alone. Then a tall woman with sister locks walked passed me. I've have seen some well put together teachers at the school, but none had such an aura of sophistication and beauty. After my brief amazement with the human being before me, I collected myself I continued to walk. I guess my gawking caught the beautiful woman's attention and she smiled and waved at me. I'm pretty sure I stared at her like a creep before giving a weak wave back. I saw her walk into a room and flustered by my own embarrassment I quickly walked away. I found myself walking passed that area of the hallway hoping to bump into the teacher I saw that one day. I didn't happen. Having such a short attention span, I went back to my regular route and schedule. One day I was walking and saw the teacher again. She seemed to be talking to someone and they end their conversation. She was looking at paper as she leaned on a wall. I walked passed her unconsciously staring at her.

She noticed me and said, "Hello and you are?"

I looked at her for a minute before saying, "Tatyana. And you are?"

"I'm Lee Ann Morning. I am starting a girls group and we need members. Would you be interested in something like that?"

I look off trying to play it cool as I replied, "I don't know," I shrugged before continuing, "Maybe."

“Girl! Here-,” she handed a piece of paper as she continued, “We meet here and in that classroom.” She pointed to the class room and said, “I’ll see you there?”

A voice inside my head screamed “Of course!”, but I kept my composure and said, “I guess?”

Through the girl’s program I got to know Mrs. Morning a little better. She was well educated and seemed to have her life in order. I admired her in more than one way and hoped to become someone like her when I got older. Mrs. Morning had a sense of humor and got into her own antics and I found that amusing. Mrs. Morning had faith that I would be successful and although I denied her claims, she slowly convinced me I could be somebody great. I wonder till this day what she saw in me, but little did I know at the time this woman would change my life forever.

Mrs. Morning was the individual who introduced me to The Summer Bridge program. From there I followed the procedure and did what I had to, to get into the program. After a paper and an interview, I got into the program. I was assigned a mentor named Cassandra. I was nervous to meet her during the first gettogether at Metro State University. I wondered at the time who this person would be like and if she would be accepting of me as well. I found my mentor amusing and a bit odd, but overall a rather quirky and a kind person. She gave me resources and the confidence I needed to pursue what I wanted to do for myself as a college student. With her I also met Chris. Although the program was short, I made great connections with them. With that I chose to keep in contact with these individuals. Later, I found out Chris was assigned to me as a person who monitors my college activity, making sure I have opportunities and the resources I needed to be successful. This continued through my two and a half years of college so far. These resources haven’t been with just school, with them, I have also had job opportunities. Cassandra helped me get my first fulfilling job with AmeriCorps. I was Summer Vista at Push Academy. There I taught psychology and art to middle school and high school (freshman) students. After that, Chris showed me the opportunity with Rocky Mountain Conservancy of Colorado. Here, I got the experience of a lifetime learning productive ways to help my community and being an active leader in new environment. Lastly, I was given another gift from Mrs. Morning with her introducing me to BankWork\$ program. After graduating from the program, I am now at my current job as a bank teller for US Bank. These relationships have formed not only my future, but have given me a whole new outlook on life and who I can be as a productive member of society.

Lee Ann Morning was a person who saved me from self-doubt and the potential of me being here today. She didn’t just give me opportunity, but stability. I would not be the person I am today. People like her and the people in the Summer Bridge program and Goodwill give me faith in humanity and a surety of a brighter future. Knowing that they help change my life pushes me to want to do the same for others. I want to pass on my experiences and resources to be a Mrs. Morning for someone else who was lost like me. I am forever changed for the better and want to do the same for my community because all it takes is hope, commitment and love to make our lives worth something.