

What If?

I try not to live my life in “what ifs.” There are enough daily complications to dwell on those too much, however, when it comes to literacy, I cannot help but ask the question “what if?”

What if my father knew how to read? What if he had fostered education and learning instead of ridiculing it? What if **his** father had fostered education and higher learning? So many what ifs, yet I know the answer to these questions,

I know with certainty that if those questions never needed to be asked, that not only my father’s life, but my and my sibling’s lives would have been vastly different. Our lives would have been much richer in terms of broadened horizons and opportunities for success. Despite those questions, I was a lucky one, I learned how to read and for the most part communicate effectively, but I will never be able to escape the “what ifs.” It is astounding to imagine how improved my father’s life would have been, had he learned how to read. It is even more astounding to imagine how much worse my life would have been if I never learned how.

Literacy isn’t only about higher education and practical purposes either, it is about having the ability to express oneself in both written word, and speaking. It is about having the ability to get lost in another world while reading your favourite book, or poem, it is about being able to fully articulate your feelings to not only the people you love and are important to you, but communicate in everyday, mundane life.

I just cannot imagine a life without being able to do the things many of us take for granted. To not be able to write a grocery list, send a sick friend a simple get well note or have the ability to read a newsletter sent home from your children’s school. It must be a devastating feeling not having the ability to do these things. I know firsthand the effects these things can have on individuals, families, and society.

It is for these many reasons that I understand the importance of literacy. It is why I have a passion for literacy.

This article, written by volunteer Cory Brietzke, appeared in edited fashion in the BCLC Spring 2010 newsletter. Reference was made that this personal testimony would appear on our website. It is offered here for your edification.