

Growing and Learning with Words

Growing up, reading, writing and verbal communication has always come naturally to me as a young child. My mother did not let me watch hours of television, but she made sure I read plenty of books. At our home office my mother had four ten feet bookcases full of books of all kinds. During the summer months, when every child was excited to be out of school there was my mother, who made sure I did not skip a beat of learning. She made me choose any book and I had to read and write a summary report for her by the end of the week. At first, I would be upset and throw tantrums thinking that my mother was punishing me, but when I sat down and did the work, I found myself enjoying it. I would sit in the middle of the office floor with books up to my ears, trying to read as many as I could before the day would end. Those fun summer days when other kids would be outside playing and enjoying ice cream, I would be in the house with all my books, reading and authoring my own stories.

Verbal communication for me has always been easy. I love to talk even as a child, I could talk your ears off, and my father would even call me machine gun mouth because I talked a lot and tremendously fast. My verbal skills came from my mother talking to me at an early age like an adult and with me reading books all the time. Both of those combined at an early age really helped me build a strong vocabulary. In grade school when we had to do presentations I would speak and use words that were above my level. Teachers would have shocked expressions on their faces because I could use big words in the right context. I also had a grandmother who was a schoolteacher, so when she was grading her students' papers, she taught me how to pronounce words clearly and use the correct grammar when speaking.

Writing, which is my favorite, all started when I was in fourth grade. I had a counselor who introduced me to what I love to do today. She told me to write down my feelings or just how my day went and that opened a door for me because my words have touched plenty of my family members. Being a kid, I had no money so for gifts I would make homemade cards with pictures, and I would author loving poems on the inside to give to family and friends. Writing has also helped me cope with my feelings and express them in a healthy way. If I were sad or upset, I would draft long papers to my mother explaining why and how I would feel better because I never could put my thoughts to words. A favorite memory of mine is when my mother would take me to work with her and she had a bunch of colorful sticky notes that I would write on all day long. She had pink, blue, green, and red and each color had a special message on them. Pink had loving and caring messages on them saying "hey mom I love you and you are doing an excellent job." Blue was words of encouragement "hey mom you got this keep going." Green would be if she were having a dreadful day and needed a smile "you are the world's greatest mom you do everything right." Then finally red I would write corny jokes just in case she needed a laugh "hey mom do you know why they call

me ranch because I be dressing.” I would stick those all over her office just to make her day and it is something I still do today.

Over the years with lots of practice using words and writing has made my first years of college easy. Having to type multiple papers on all topics has been fun because I can sit and just write for hours. I like that I can sit and draft a paper and have someone outside my family critique it and tell me how good I am. Knowing that my challenging work and dedication is paying off makes me want to keep writing. I never had a strategy for writing. I would just write, and the words would flow on the paper like water. Writing has helped me be the person who I am today. It has helped me be in touch with my feelings and help me express myself to others when I cannot put them into words.