

Todd Kenyon

2014 Nova Learning Inc. Nova Scotia Learner Award Recipient

From a young age I was always considered a strong student. My issues have never been about problems in the classroom but rather issues that lay outside of it. My parents had me at a very young age and were not well suited for one another. Growing up in that environment had caused me to become an angry child early on.

My parents eventually divorced around the time I was ten and I moved in with my mother. I became an even angrier teen and was constantly acting out, making life difficult at home for myself and everyone around me. I eventually went to live with my grandparents to try and get a fresh start. For a while everything was good again. I was being successful in both school and other aspects of life. Eventually the same patterns repeated themselves. I began distancing myself and making life hard on my family. This is the biggest regret that I have had in my life the way I handled that situation. One morning, after my grandmother and I had just gotten into a big argument, I said some nasty things before heading off for school. When I returned for lunch time, I came home to find that she had passed away from what I now know was a heart attack. This event really weighed heavily on my life and caused me to sink into a deep depression.

I moved in with a couple of friends of mine and became dependent on drugs or alcohol to make it through my days. This went on for a while and I barely attended any classes at that point of my life. School no longer seemed like a priority to me. I ended up giving up entirely on the idea of finishing school and instead decided to move out to Alberta to make money working in the oil fields. This only intensified my issues as I was spending most of my money to keep up with my bad habits. This trend continued and was leading down a dangerous path. I had numbed out the world around me stopped caring about myself entirely.

While I was on an off week I was playing basketball and ended up tearing all of the major ligaments in my knee forcing me out of work and back to live with my mother. At the time it seemed like a terrible thing but this event may have been something which had saved my life. After this I realized I was going to need school in order to be successful in life and needed to find something which provided more security in life

I knew I needed something more and had heard great things about the Adult Learning Program from friends on mine. Based on all of my past mistakes and problems within school I possessed a deeper understanding of myself and realized ways to make school enjoyable and something I wanted to wake up and attend every single day. I fully immersed myself within ALP and tried to make as many connections as possible within the school. My instructors and peers have been greatly inspirational to me and have helped me overcome many of my difficulties.

During the year of school I took on the role of a peer tutor and have gotten to see that everyone around me has a story and that I wasn't alone in my struggles. I am proud to say that I have now graduated from ALP and have achieved honors within the program.

My learning and career goals have never been higher or more in sight than they are at this time. I have been accepted to Mount Saint Vincent University in the fall for Political Science, and have earned a \$2000 entrance scholarship through my academic achievements within ALP.

My life has changed substantially since returning to school. I feel confident in both my ability as a student and as a leader. Returning to school has taken the dreams I once had and expanded upon them. I never thought University would be an option for me, but now I believe I can not only pass the classes but excel in them.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity returning to school has provided me.