

Outside the Box (part five)

by c.e.chapple

As stated in my prior article, trying to improve myself was a challenge. Many employers did not want to hire me, I did not work well as part of a team, and it is difficult to pay off a student loan while working primarily as a temp for minimum wage. But I am nothing if not persistent so, after a time, I again sold up, and hitchhiked back to B.C. with the intention of going back to school.

Ah, the best laid plans; I was accepted back into Capilano College but found so little work that summer that when it came time to pay my fees, I had not received my student loan, and could not even borrow the money from my father who had just gambled himself into debt in Las Vegas. There went another dream down the drain. I was an Honour student but could not afford to educate myself.

Many years later, after dozens upon dozens of temporary jobs, or jobs in which my social skills meant dismissal, I was married to a kind man and the mother of three. My husband was told it would be many years before he could have hip surgery, I had an injury at work. Suddenly we were both disabled and with mouths to feed.

I read that children are more likely to follow their mother in terms of education. If I was to upgrade my education, my children would likely imitate me. Surely, I thought, times have changed, and maybe there was a better way. Besides, if I had education, a disability would be less of a barrier.

My husband, who also had left school at the end of grade 10, said he would go to school with me, so I began researching. Soon, we were both doing correspondence through an adult learning centre, and also taking some classes at the local high school, with the high school students. Two of our children were in daycare and one of them was in school. Life seemed brighter.

When I completed grade 11, I applied as a mature student to the University of Windsor, and was able to get some advanced standing based on my old courses at Capilano. I attended grade 12 day classes part-time, did a couple more courses by correspondence, and took night classes at university after my children were fed and bathed. My husband was in day classes full-time and stayed home at night. I gave birth to my fourth child shortly before our high school graduation and continued on with evening courses at the university until my child was weaned and able to attend day care.

It is important to note that our success at school thus far had been because we were both identified as students with disabilities, although it transpired that I needed more support than previously identified.

(Read my next article to find out more.)

About the Author

I am both a mother and a grandmother, from southwestern Ontario and currently residing in Victoria, B.C I have two degrees, one of which is in Honours English from the University of Western Ontario. I have been writing since I was eight years old, and have had numerous pieces published in anthologies, literary journals, newsletters, newspapers, and online. Writing has kept me sane in a crazy world. I am 65 and was not diagnosed with Asperger's until I was 45, after a lifetime of never fitting in, and suffering from both depression and social anxiety. I am also a multiple survivor of abuse, much of which would not have occurred had I been identified as a child. I am also a status Metis, a member of both BC Metis and the Painted Woodland Metis Tribe of Ontario.

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