

The Writer's Compass: Celebrating 30 Years as a Writer

This is the Story of My First Mentor, Jim Hunter

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, June 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Growing up in Tuolumne County, California, my life consisted of building forts, making spears, shooting BB guns, playing superheroes with my friends, and discovering new ways to injure myself while making my mother's hair turn grey.

Before my 10th birthday, my mother, sister, and I moved back to the city where I was born. This move was a dramatic shift; I was in a bigger town with fewer places to play in the dirt, a bigger school, and more of those distracting creatures known as girls.

I hated having to move. I missed my friends and my freedom to play and roam around town on my bike. I was in a big city now with too many rules. There was only one positive aspect, I believed, to my exodus from my boyhood paradise. At Cherrywood School, I had the most incredible teacher: my hero in elementary education, Mr. Hunter.

“

Don't ever play cards with a man named Doc.”

Jim Hunter

In Mr. Hunter's class, it was like sports drafts of athletes back into the adventures of my boyhood existence. Some might have considered his teaching methods somewhat

unconventional; we stood up often while we were learning, played games, yelled, and competed for prizes. My favorite time took place at the end of class, each Friday. We would turn out the lights, put on candles and write creative stories. Mr. Hunter kicked it off and read aloud the introduction to our collective adventure. Then, he instructed us to write stories for thirty minutes, whatever came to mind that fit the opening. We were the potential authors of the next



chapter. Each week, he would collect all of our stories and choose one to be the next adventure part. Oh, how I anticipated every Friday, hoping that my favorite teacher would pick my story.

As weeks went by and the school year was coming to a close, not once would I get to author part of our story in the class. Thirty minutes never seemed like enough time to get all my thoughts out on paper, and as creatively as I wrote, I never finished many of my stories.

Although this was a hard lesson for a fifth-grader, it never dethroned, in my eyes, Mr. Hunter as one of the most extraordinary teachers a kid could ever have. He represented a turning point in my career as a student, but nothing had prepared me for what was about to happen next.



I made some of the most memorable friendships in the fifth grade. It felt great to be one of the cool kids again, with friends who had some of the same interests as me. I guess the city was not such a horrible place to live after all.

My friends differed from me in one area of life: they seemed to all like girls, and some even had girlfriends. This miscalculated social risk was certainly not part of my plan for my life. I thought that girls did not fit into the lifestyle of a fifth-grader. We were boys, meant to do boy things. I just wanted to play sports, get dirty, and find something that I could make explode on special occasions.

I thought all was going according to plan for me when she arrived. That manipulative creature with beautiful long hair and a friendly smile tangled me up in her web. She brought with her an entourage of two other girls to confront me on the playground. I was trapped. I cringed as they handed me a note that stunk of perfume, corrupted with glitter and girly handwriting. I was then slowly tortured as I read the disgusting proposition of having her as my girlfriend. I must have been under a spell or lost my mind, as I agreed to this horrible idea.

I spent the last few weeks of school avoiding her. I believe it was my soldier-like instincts telling me when to engage or retreat that kept me safe from her traps. Even as a boy, I knew not to engage in battles with a girl with the unfair advantage of winning.

On the last day of school, life was bitter-sweet. I would certainly miss my rock star teacher, but I knew my days as a captive boyfriend were over. Many students cried on the last day of school as we realized our time together had just ended. Our days in Mr. Hunter's class would soon become nothing more than a memory.

The following school year was middle school, sixth grade. My friends and I were in the big leagues of Piedmont Middle school, and my favorite class that year was my Creative Writing class. My teacher even looked like Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison. One of our first assignments was to write about our experiences in the fifth grade. One of our first tasks was a creative writing assignment, and we had two weeks to complete it. I had the perfect opportunity to write about that girl who had stalked me in the fifth grade, using her female powers to make me her boyfriend.

After Mrs. Phoenix graded the assignments, all the kids received theirs back with a grade. All of the students, except for one. Me. My teacher stood there, glaring down at me over her coke bottle glasses without saying a word, clenching my story in her hand. She looked up at the rest of the class as if she was non-verbally drawing them in preparation for my scolding. My mind began racing. Perhaps I had taken it too far? Maybe I should not have referred to a girl as a creature or a stalker? She did say to be creative. I sat, nervously anticipating what she was about to say.

"Good morning, students. I want to read this story to all of you. In all my years as a teacher, I have never read a story quite like this. Not only am I giving this story the top grade, but I am also submitting it to the local paper to be published."

Whew! I let out a sigh of relief. And that is how, in the sixth grade, I was published as a writer for the first time.

Language Arts, and all classes related to writing, would continue to be my favorite subjects in school. I would almost always get "straight A's," as well as receive positive encouragement from my teachers on my ability to write. Writing became my craft. I wished, at the time, I could have just taken writing classes and dropped all math classes completely; I hated them.

After I completed middle school, I attended Bellarmine College Preparatory, an all-boys school in San Jose. I want to point out, while the boy dynamic would have been great for elementary school, it was not desirable to me as a teenager.

At Bellarmine, college planning was built into my student agenda from day one. Before applying to colleges, all students had to take the SATs. I was excited about attending college, knowing my GPA gave me several options; all I had to do was score well on the standardized test. I took prep classes. I studied relentlessly. I bombed.

Even though Math was not my best subject, I scored in the top percentile. I scored much lower on the English section. This experience was devastating. A secret that I had hidden for years was about to surface when the test scores came out. It was a vaulted secret that none of my friends knew. Not even a single teacher was aware of it. Ever since I first learned how to read and write, I

battled with dyslexia.

I could not finish the English section of the test, and I left several answers blank because it took me so long to read the questions. The areas I could complete were near perfect, but my learning disability was a stumbling block in my path to finishing the test on time. I took the test a couple of times. I could have had a great score if I only had more time.

I still attended a good college, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. I did well in most of my classes, but I put my aspirations of becoming a professional writer on the shelf.

While attending college, I started my coaching program working with kids. Many of the kids I worked with had various levels of autism. I discovered something important during this time in my career. I had a shift in my mindset when I focused on each of my client's strengths; consistent focus on strengths helped lessen their weaknesses.

I related this to my own life. As someone with dyslexia, I knew I had to develop a way to combat this weakness. Despite my challenges, I loved to read and learn. I became obsessed with learning about history. I had to practice reading out loud repeatedly on this journey, walking through my fears and insecurities. I discovered my strengths.

As the years have passed, I continue to study more now than I ever did as a student in school. I often speak in public with audiences of all sizes. My passion grew into working as a copywriter and storyteller.

On the other side of our weakness, in each of us, I believe is an incredible strength. I am thankful for every opportunity, challenge, and failure. I know now that they are all invaluable contributions to my design and purpose in this life. I write and teach to inspire others, but my mission is to show others how to discover what is brilliant in each of them and how they can bring value to their world.

Thank you to my hero, Mr. Hunter, the leader in my life who first inspired me to be a creative writer. I have never played cards with a man named Doc, but I have learned to build a life with the cards I was dealt.

Written by Jeff Glass, Former Fifth Grader, Chief Branding Officer of [Alpha Media Group](#)

Jeff Glass

Alpha Media Group

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/544810221>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something

we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2021 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.