

### **Childhood Years: Pooh and Olivia**

As a child, reading was never one of my favorite past times. I remember reading these small books called “A Little Golden Book”. My mother purchased many of these books from the thrift store for my siblings and myself. I would spend lots of time looking at all the art work in these books while reading them. My favorite one was Winnie the Pooh and Tiger by A.A. Milne. As I got older, I would only read books that were assigned to me in school. I was still not a fan of reading. My motto since childhood has been “if the book is so good then I will wait to see the movie”. One book that I did choose to read in elementary school was called Singing Sweetly. This book had biographies on Cher, Roberta Flack and Olivia Newton John. I had seen a preview for the movie Grease with Olivia Newton John. I was captivated by her beauty and fell in love with her voice. I read the chapter of her life story over and over. I had checked the book out so often that the librarian discarded the book and gave it to me as a gift. I still own it to this day and am still a fan of Olivia.

### **Teenage Years: Learning About the World Around Me**

In my teens, I was engulfed into the world of comics. I was drawn not only to the story lines but to the amazing art work. During this time, I also discovered my love for history. Reading through my history textbooks throughout high school had become a pleasure. My interest was piqued when I read about two historical moments, the holocaust and the killing of Tsar Nicholas II and his family. The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank left an emotional mark on me. This is the one book I was able to read without feeling as though I could have done something more productive. Hitler led his people like sheep. How could one man create such hatred towards a single race of people? Nicholas and Alexandra by Robert K. Massie provided me with more information than what I was able to get from the school textbooks. Tsar Nicholas II did not have a grasp of what his people needed from him as a leader. These two historical incidents affected

how I viewed people. I started working for Home Depot when I was eighteen. I quickly moved up the ladder and became a department manager and then an assist store manager. Throughout my career, I ensured that I treated my associates the way that I wanted to be treated. I did not let anyone's race or background affect my judgment towards anyone. I allowed their performance to determine my judgment of them.

### **Adult Years: History and Knowledge**

As an adult, reading had still not become part of my regular pastimes. I continued to read books about Hitler and the Russian Tsar but even those topics could not keep my interest for a long period of time. I could only read just a few pages at a time before feeling anxious. Reading books about Russian history also created an interest in their art. I found myself looking at books about Faberge and his masterful creations of the jeweled Easter eggs that the Tsar would give to his wife and mother. Masterpieces from the House of Faberge gave me insight into the life of Carl Faberge and background information about some of the Russian treasures. This interest fueled my passion in all types of art but especially art that had a history. I found myself reading books about paintings, sculptures, and even jewelry. My enthusiasm for art exploded when I got to travel abroad. I visited the Louvre in Paris and got to see the art that I had only read about. I also visited London and got to take a tour of Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London. My finale trip was to Amsterdam. Anne Frank's book came to life as I walked up the stairs of the building that she and her family hid in. The stairs were so steep and narrow to get to the room where the Frank family lived. These tours ignited an interest in history of other countries besides Russia and Germany.

School has once again forced me to read articles and books that I would not have read on my own. What nurses know...PTSD the answer you need from the people you trust by M. Muscari is

the title of a book I read for my psychology class. The book educated me of the nightmares people with PTSD go through to be diagnosed and their treatment. Through reading this book, I noticed some symptoms in myself from a car accident that I had a few years back. I get an unnerving feeling that comes over me when I am stopped at a light. I had heard of Malcolm X but never really knew about him. I read an excerpt from The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley and Malcom X. I was immediately enthralled by what I read. He overcame many challenges to learn to read. His desire to learn motivated me. He did not let anything stand in his way. He took a dictionary and read it and copied it by hand word for word. He would use the lights coming through his cell window to read. He educated himself from behind bars. He did not have educators giving him guidance or support. His dedication to his education helps me to put my own desire for further learning in prospective. When I feel lost or overwhelmed, I look back to this excerpt and remind myself of the importance of pushing yourself. If Malcolm X could teach himself to read on his own, I can sit in a classroom with an instructor and learn accounting or any other subject that I am taking.