

This I Believe Statement
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I believe in the power of the written word. Write it down and it is remembered, or more personal, or recorded for future reference or even a form of art. All kinds of writing are useful: shopping lists, thank you cards, memos, books, emails.... I love to read a book and see the pictures and places created in my mind. I remember reading The Shining by Stephen King while working in the Contemporary Hotel at Disney World one summer. It is about a big haunted hotel in the mountains of Colorado. Despite sitting in a hotel lobby full of people, I thought I was in that haunted hotel and I can still see myself jumping out of my seat at a really climactic point in the book and suddenly realizing where I was. Written words can take you away to another place.

I also know that written interactions are handy for shy people. When I had my first boyfriend and my parents weren't very happy with a choice I had made, I spent several hours writing to express my independence and my choice not to spend the holidays with them. The unexpected blessing came when my father, in the form of a hand written letter, returned my correspondence with a heart felt and deeply moving note. In it he wrote about how important having me there for our family traditions would be and how much I would be missed if I didn't come home but how much he respected my right to choose. Of course, I chose to be there.

My dad is a prolific writer. He uses a word processing application now but for the longest time it was ball point pen on yellow legal pad. He got his thoughts out and processed them on those yellow pads. I can imagine him thinking, "How can I explain to someone my idea more clearly?" "How do I let someone know bad news?" "How do I communicate my deep feelings about a topic or for a person?" I can picture his lefty writing today. My mother was an elementary school teacher and my memories of her writing are of perfect printing on the chalk board. She spent her career teaching new students how to write their letters and create sentences.

I recently received a handwritten note from my ageless aunt celebrating my 50th birthday. As she could remember my birth, it was especially meaningful. She wrote that she remembered the night before my first day of school and that I called my mother into my bedroom after several minutes of lying there and announced, "Call the teacher. I am not going. And that is it." I have never been one for eagerly anticipating new situations in my life. I am more of a worrier. Her note reminded me how far I have come and how many new things I have experienced quite successfully since that day. I am grateful my mom didn't call the teacher and I got to have my first day of kindergarten like everyone else. There are still so many "first days" yet to come. All from a handwritten note.