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Public Speaking

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Introductory Speech

Hi everyone, my name is Jaysen Bass, and I am a senior here at Boston College. Yes, I know, isn’t it a little late to take a foundation communication course? Well to that I say, it is never too late. I waited so long to take public speaking because of my fear of speaking in front of groups of people I am unfamiliar with. It’s strange though, because I would do it all the time when I would play video games online. Communicating with strangers, teambuilding, and conveying plans were all a part of my daily activities, but there is just something different about doing it in “Real Life”, where you can physically see the people you are talking to, as well as the results of the words you decide to use. Regardless, I hope it is a fear that I will conquer soon, and slowly, but surely, I have taken strides in doing just that.

One thing that has helped me with my fears is my position as president in the student organization writers circle, which you should join if you like writing in any capacity. Leading a club in which I am extremely invested has helped me gain the courage to speak in front of groups of new people. I think the passion for writing developed when I was just a kid in elementary school. When I was younger, my mother was a grant writer for a non-profit homeless shelter for women and their children in Newark, New Jersey, the same city I was born and raised in before moving to the Poconos in Pennsylvania, if you happen to know where that is.

I will never forget when the shelter she worked for received grant money from Oprah Winfrey. Theee Oprah Winfrey. The same one that that Josh Peck fanboyed over and then ran over in the show Drake and Josh. Of the few famous people I knew, her name was one of them. She was a pillar of inspiration. A breath of air for young African Americans who were looking to become more than they were ever told they could be. That moment was the first one where I truly got to recognize the power of writing. Words got her to donate the money, words got her invested in a program that she may have had no other attachment to, words bridged the gap from fiction that I saw in media to the reality of the small bubble that a younger me inhabited. They are the same tools that originally got me into storytelling, and the same ones that will assist me through my pursuits of passions that use them all too often.

Speaking of passions, one of mine growing up was YouTube. I would use it for advice on the games I was playing, and just as a second level of entertainment for things I enjoyed doing. Hearing people share their expertise, or simply entertain, at levels greater than popular media was fascinating to me. This is where I learned the difference in communicative ability. My favorite youtubers were able to get their points across more effectively, whether it be because they knew how to keep it concise and all encompassing, or because they could go in depth and extrapolate on complex ideas that could not be easily explained. I learned that simply saying things does not mean that they will be comprehended. You have to be effective in your approach and understand the demographics of people you are trying to reach. So, if a video was about something very specific, I would expect the analysis to be a little more in depth as I probably already understand the basics. Watching these youtubers grow and share their stories inspired me, and as someone with many different interests, I aspired to be like them. Confident enough to put my words out there and dedicated enough to take the next step and share my interests with people who might be like me.

It was through the passion for YouTube that I discovered another. Music. This became my therapy. I stumbled across J. Cole because my brother had mentioned him, and then I heard his music as the outro for one of my favorite YouTube channels, so I figured I had to check it out. I could not be happier with the discovery. His life seemed to mirror mine in some respects and gave me new ways to think about old problems. Not only that but hope always seemed to linger in between and around his lyrics. I knew that I would be okay because if he could make it, then so could I. After listening to more artists and discovering new genres of music, his was what I always came back to. So, I began looking into him and found out more about who he is as a person outside of what he says in the songs. That’s when I found out he was a communication major in college, and so I started to look into what that was, and turns out, it was the major for me. The college I attended before BC did not offer it as a major, so I felt unfulfilled in my classes and always felt like I was missing something, so despite having an amazing freshman year, and meeting some of the best friends of my life, I decided to transfer to BC.

My adjustment to BC has been tough at times, just like the move from Newark to the Poconos. The biggest thing I missed out on was all the bonding that is done freshman year when everyone is finding their space on campus, but the one thing that saved me was being able to use my words. I was able to ask the right questions to get the answers I needed about things on campus I would not have found out about otherwise, and I was able to meet people who shared interest with me through those spaces. I learned a lot about all of you through listening to your speeches and it got me thinking about how amazing it is that we are all in this classroom. We are all unique individuals with vastly different backgrounds and yet we are all here. Not only that, but in the future we may all be in drastically different places. Our pasts don’t define us, rather I like to think, how we decide to approach the future does.

If you asked me 10 years ago where I would be today, I would have never thought that it would be a Boston College classroom. The first thing I ever wanted to be was a lawyer because on TV, all they would do is help people and tell stories, whether they are lying or not, but later on, I realized I much rather tell my story and share things that I have learned in life. Nevertheless, if you ask me where I see myself in 10 years from now, I have no clue what I would tell you, but I hope this class and our experiences together help me figure that out. Thank you and have a great day.