*This I Believe* Personal Essay

English 12

August 2014

Now that we have completed a number of in class exercises to prepare you for your personal essay, it is finally time to start writing! Remember that the personal essay is focused on belief or insight that is significant to you. The curriculum offers the following tips for writing:

1. Tell a story: Be specific. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Use your own life experience. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching – it can even be funny – but it should be real. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.
2. Be brief: Your essay should be between 350 and 500 words.
3. Name your belief: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on a core belief, because this is a relatively short essay.
4. Be positive: Write about what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Make your essay about YOU; speak in first person. Avoid lecturing or editorializing.
5. Be personal: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you. That being said, do not write like you text.
6. Use sensory details in your essay.
7. Avoid trite, overused phrases. Never ever start an essay with “Did you ever wonder…” because chances are no one has.

Since this is a formal essay, please adhere to formal essay protocol. This means that your essay should be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, and MLA format. Your essay should be submitted to turnitin.com and the TII report should be attached to your essay. Your essay should be stapled or clipped and ready to turn in at the beginning of class. Keep a clean copy of your essay for your writing portfolio. The days ahead will be filled with thoughts about your future. For some of you that means college essays, job applications, interviews, etc. My personal goal through this assignment is to help you develop insight about yourself to help you begin this process. I ask that you take this essay assignment seriously, and allow yourself the proper time to sit and reflect before you put fingers on the keypad. In other words, avoid starting this assignment the night before it is due.

Please visit thisibelieve.org.

Draft Date:

Submitted to TII:

Final Copy Date:

Point Value: 50

\*Courtesy of *This I Believe 2008*