

Lights! Music! DANCE! Some call dance an art; others call it a sport; I call it a lifestyle. After fourteen years of dedication to Hart Academy of Dance, it has become my second home. When passers-by view the dance studio, they may erroneously assume it is an insignificant warehouse. However, beyond the tacky, steel-framed door lies my world of happiness, frustration, peace, and growth.

My parents have always given me the freedom to do what I want. I have been making my own decisions with few restrictions since I was a child. Growing up with unlimited opportunities allowed me to discover my true passion. My heart told me to dance, and fate led me to Hart. I immediately fell in love with dancing and its surrounding way of life. Dance is a world of balance and strength. While many dancers take classes merely to socialize or to have something to do, I feel as if dance is much more personal. Besides dancing for simple pleasure, I dance to release myself emotionally. I forget everything—even breathing—and my body takes over; all I do is dance. I can find peace.

Through dance, I realize the person I want to be. I have learned to live in the moment; dance is about following impulse and moving freely. I aspire to continue living spontaneously and joyously in all aspects of my life. I understand that struggles can only strengthen me. When I face a challenging dance combination, I devote all my efforts towards reaching that goal until I succeed. With each new challenge, I gain a sense of endurance and determination. I have also discovered the importance of looking into the future and knowing where I want to end up. By imagining how I want a dance to look, I can work to make my thoughts become a reality. I look towards my teachers and fellow dancers, whom I admire, to gain inspiration. I have teammates who not only teach me to work as a group, but who also push my abilities and compel me to improve.

Not only has dance taught me how to be a responsible and reliable team member, but it has also helped me learn how to manage my time. With multiple hours of practice every week, it becomes important to use every second wisely. I have discovered how to make every moment count for something and live without regrets. When I falter during a performance, I simply smile bigger and keep dancing. I look back on these mistakes with new insight and strive to progress.

The greatest aspect I take from dance is passion. True desire makes life worthwhile. Passion allows me to reach levels of greatness that I never knew existed. When I set goals, I dedicate myself to achieving whatever it may be. I dream indefinitely of creating and exploring. New things can always be created, and new places can always be explored. This mindset drives me in all aspects of my life. When I succeed in one goal, there is always another challenge waiting for me. With dance, I aim to master one step; once I do, I am ready to try another. When I let go of fear and boundaries, I find new opportunities and goals. Whether they are small or farfetched dreams, I always let my heart decide.