

It was the summer before sixth grade when the fateful decision was made. I had seen the older girls with their glamorous makeup and sparkling costumes. It seemed fun and, to be honest, not that difficult. So, I did it. I joined my dance studio's competition team. While I did not realize it at the time, that decision would change my life, shape my character, and help me to develop qualities that, perhaps, would make me worthy of inclusion in the incoming freshman class.

My first impressions about being a member of the competition team were both very right and, at the same time, very wrong. Some of the best times I have had and the closest friendships I have developed have been because of dance. Rarely, however, has it been easy. I have sat in a makeshift dressing room in the dark, cold basement of the War Memorial at midnight on a Sunday waiting to perform, knowing that in only six hours I would have to be awake and ready for school. I have stood at the ballet barre while my friends attended "the" party of the year. I have practiced a turn until my toes were raw and missing several layers of skin. At times like those, I have questioned my sanity.

However, when that long-awaited routine earned a high score award, or when that much practiced turn was executed precisely, I was able to realize that the only definite way to achieve goals is through commitment, hard work, and perseverance.

I was a shy child, not merely timid, but painfully shy. My shoes often became my focal point when anyone tried to converse with me. At that point, it was unthinkable for me to be onstage by myself, performing a solo, with the glare of the spotlight shining on me alone. To allow myself to be watched, scrutinized, and judged was like bearing my soul for the world to see.

Eventually, however, I was persuaded to compete a solo routine. That first year was, to be certain, a challenge. It was difficult to receive a silver medal when many of my friends were awarded gold. The judges commented on my lack of control and "crazy arms." Although I found it devastating at the time, the ability to accept criticism, to apply it, and to improve because of it, is one of the most important lessons I have learned. It has caused me to develop confidence and to become resilient.

Commitment, perseverance, confidence, and resilience are just a few of the many traits that I have developed through my dance experiences. While some of the skills I have acquired will likely prove more beneficial to me in life than others - learning to work as part of a team will probably be more useful than the ability to effect a complete change of clothes in forty five seconds or less - I believe that much of the knowledge I have acquired will serve me well as I continue my education.

Upon the completion of a Bachelor of Arts from the SUNY College at Brockport, my primary career objective would be to move forth in the hope of becoming a member of a modern dance company. My desire to become a professional dancer stems from my lifelong, unquenchable thirst for new knowledge of movement. Since my earliest days as a student, I have rigorously pushed myself to strive for excellence in my pursuits. I know of no better capstone for my passion for learning and for the art of dance than to earn a degree at the College at Brockport, and then utilize the knowledge and skills that I have acquired to dance professionally.

I have gained a significant feeling of accomplishment through my acceptance into the prestigious dance program at SUNY Brockport. Knowing that I will be able to increase my knowledge of what I love to do gives me a sense of hope for what I will be able to achieve in the future.