

**Reflective Essay 1 Sample
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The license plate of New Hampshire reads Live Free or Die. Undoubtedly, this refers to the revolutionary cry for liberation from repressive outside forces. A more befitting interpretation for me, though, would imply a deliverance from the abusively restrictive nature of myself.

The downward spiral was fast and fierce. It was the spring of my eighth grade year and with each passing day I drew increasingly within. My peers were waging a battle for sameness, and I stood confused, an all-too-conscientious objector. My intrinsic, subconscious need to fit in actively conflicted with my disgust of the "ideal" person I seemingly had to become to do that. Analytically, I was far advanced; emotionally, I was the runt. My world felt out of my control and I groped for something that was not. Jarring months passed, my parents dragged me to the doctor, and the words were finally spoken aloud: anorexia nervosa.

In the midst of one of the most rapid growth periods of my life, I was shutting my body down. My parents were terrified but were determined to help me trounce the disorder. In a plea for magic, my mother and I trekked down to rural, central Mexico where, for three months, we lived with a family and taught daily classes of English to local children. The hope was that the sudden and succulent change of scenery would snap me out of it. The scheme faltered and I returned not as a healthy, actualized young man, but a wasted, frantically weak sack of bones whose emotional fragility embarrassed even the little bit of himself that remained. My body had surrendered a third of its original (and never excessive) weight, and my psyche had relinquished even more. Without fear of over-exaggeration, my state was horrific -- I could not even cognize what it would be like to be better. Doctors insisted I be hospitalized ("... or else he might not wake up some morning ..."), and there I stayed for over a month.

With parachutes open and uplifting drafts finally blowing through, the real journey began. The hospital gave me a calm reflection period, and in time, rational thought became less fleeting. Upon my release, I returned to my freshman year of high school, just over four months tardy. To say that the following period was plagued with failures is an understatement. I do not know if I will ever engage in a more difficult or perverted battle in my life. To actively fight oneself is insidious business. At all times I betrayed part of myself, causing emotional endurance to be nearly impossible to regain. I had to quadruple any willpower I had used in starving myself to now replenish my "masterpiece".

From where did this willpower come? Having seen the grueling depths, the splendor of the crisp air above began to sink in. This world is full of harmony and I realized that I could be a player of it. I began to develop my worldly, aesthetic values. I found peace in everything from the sparkle of one's eye to the hue in a stretching sunset to the innocence in a kitten's face. In essence, these became my religion. I now live for that beauty. I strive to create that beauty.

I am that beauty.

I am Maya Angelou, spinning tragedy into harmony. I am Roberto Benigni, leaping across seat tops. I am the invincible boy who dreams to go to Mars. I am the wise and weathered grandma who cherishes her loved ones. I frolic in the gales, like the resplendent autumn leaves. I soften sharp edges, like the buoyant, babbling creeks. My compassion is thrilling, my creativity transcending. I love unabashedly, sing uncontrollably. I am far too enthralled by the euphony of the world to experience anything less than adulation and a fierce desire to explore and help better it. Yes, I will be shot down, time and time again, but wounds heal stronger than before. Darkness is an essential step in true enlightenment.

In eighth and ninth grade, I was bloodied. I was bloodied by my peers and I was bloodied by myself. From the grotesque depths of helplessness, though, I have soared to individually unprecedented heights. I have opened myself up and found that I have the ability to be the very person I dream of being. Yes, I am still a teenage boy who goofs up all the time, but I am where I want to be in my mental, emotional, and (not to be forgotten) physical development.

More than any other achievement in my life, I am proud of this one. The chemical deficiency that led to this devastating, psychological disease was absolutely out of my control; the warm power that was used to beat it was not. What underlying, overriding lesson has enlightened me, then? Simplistically speaking, I suppose the expression Live Free or Die fits. A more personally appropriate way of stating it, though, is this:

If I live free, I fly.

Sample Reflection Paper On Seminars

Rachel Sandford



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