

Liam

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scholar

Cherry Lane Pre-school came first. This was a fun experience, especially as we also learnt to cook. I felt like a pretty normal kid and had no idea that things would not always be this simple and fun.

I went on to Kyalami School for my grade R year. It was during this year that I first felt different from my classmates. I vividly recall how the teacher shouted at me because I needed to move my page around so as to enable me to colour in effectively. It doesn't sound like a big deal I know, but in hindsight I now see how this was the start of what was to become an all too familiar pattern. My formal school career started at Summit College.

After the entrance assessment, I was placed in the "remedial" class. I was one of 7 children who received tuition in this small group. It was a very frustrating experience initially, as Maths came very easily to me (and still does). On the other hand, language in all its forms (except verbal) posed a big challenge.

Fortunately, halfway through grade 1, it was decided that I could go to the Mainstream Maths class.

This was the fun part of school life, but of course I did always have to return

to the remedial class for the other subjects...

By grade 2 my English had improved sufficiently for me to return to the mainstream class.

This was where my real challenge began, sadly. Spelling tests were a nightmare.

I do recall getting 70% on one occasion, but for the most part, my mark was in the region of 30%. It was terribly embarrassing.

My reports typically reflected my natural talent for Maths, but I came woefully short in anything which required me to read and write.

On a brighter note, my teacher, Mrs Olsfen, will forever stand out in my memory as the first teacher I really loved. She was the perfect teacher - kind, encouraging and infinitely patient.

She also was the first person to identify that mine was a situation which warranted intervention.

Apparently, the school didn't agree with her though.

My amazing mom was determined (and still is), to take me for whatever help I could possibly use. I will also be eternally grateful for my mom who has "journeyed" with me every step of the way.

She always guided me to be responsible and consistent in making the appropriate efforts to help myself.

I recall a highly recommended programme (very expensive) which I attended for 3 years (it felt like it was way longer), which involved silly physical exercises as well as the usual "extra help" for me to catch up my language deficits.

And so to the next chapter. A turning point! My sister was leaving the College to go to High School and so I also changed schools.

At St Paulus, I was assessed and it was recommended that I receive Remedial Therapy with Ms Carissa Klokow. Amazing!!!

For the first time, I felt that something positive was happening in my English. I could see results, because she had creative and fun methods which I hadn't experienced before.

I was motivated and excited to attend her sessions as well as do everything she asked me to do (also homework!) My reading and spelling, although still behind, improved dramatically.

This, in combination with the fact that she helped me to believe in myself, made a huge difference in my life.

Then came grade 5, still at St Paulus. Ms Passetti, my Afrikaans teacher, was a heaven-sent angel in my life.

She was the first teacher with whom I ever attained 100% for a spelling test. I was elated beyond words and will never forget that day.

I recommend that you get involved in a sport or a hobby that you enjoy to boost your confidence, that is where friendships are made and nobody knows that you cannot read or write.

