

WHAT'S YOUR
Passion

LIFE CHANGED MY PASSION



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FROM AGES THREE to twenty-one, an essential part of my self-image was that I was a dancer. I started as a toddler, donned in a black leotard with pink hearts as I learned how to point my toes. This progressed to lessons for ballet, tap, jazz, and eventually, to a weekly repertoire of lessons for nine styles of dance. I loved the unison and teamwork it took to put on recitals with the other dancers. I loved competing against myself and others. I loved the thrill of performing in front of an audience, the way my muscles felt the morning after a long day of rehearsing, and most of all, I loved the escape it offered from everything else in my life. Through bullies, broken hearts, and bad days, I maintained a sense of pride in myself because of dance. It never mattered what was going on. I could go to the dance studio, and other aspects of life would fade away.

At the age of twenty-one, this piece of my identity vanished when I was struck by a car. The first few months were spent in gloom, lying awake from pain at night and suffering through it during the day. It took much longer than that to realize my old body, and previous state of mind were gone. Looking back, I see how this negatively affected both physical and mental aspects of my life. I was less motivated, less confident, and had a slightly empty feeling inside for years. Unable to move my body as I used to, my passion was missing. Passion isn't something we're generally reminded to take a mental check of, at least, not like the glasses of water we drink in a day or the vitamins we take. But passion is just as essential to well being and satisfaction in life. Several years were spent just going through the motions and struggling to process what my future would now look like. As I worked through realizing my physical limitations were here to stay, I had a difficult time watching others do the things I used to. I left the library in pain and crying many times during law school. Seeing other students sitting and studying for hours on end brought about mental anguish because that was not something I could do. I would be in pain within minutes of sitting down.

I went to physical therapy and doctor's visits for years with little to show for it. In the spring of 2020, law school went to virtual classrooms as COVID-19 spread and I

felt inspired to use this extra time to take my health into my own hands. I exercised as much as possible, ate anti-inflammatory foods, and kept to a healthy sleep routine. Unfortunately, I did not find myself pain-free, but I did discover a new passion.

My vigorous struggle to combat pain turned into me looking at wellness from a holistic perspective. It began with researching ways to fight inflammation but grew into a passion for better, cleaner living for both body and mind. I love seeking out new whole foods to cook with, doing my daily stretches, and exploring meditation, prayer, and reflection to care for my mind.

Having a passion again has been nourishing. It provides an outlet from day-to-day stress and keeps me motivated to achieve my goals. In the same way that making one's bed each morning gives a sense of accomplishment, engaging in something I am passionate about helps me feel secure on those days where nothing has gone as planned. I know that I've done something good for myself that will help me tackle whatever comes my way. My self-image has changed since the collision, but I am happy to say that discovering a new love of wellness has helped me accept the changes to my body and be proud of myself once again. **W**

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