

Introduction

Everyone has fears, and I would like to use this vignette book to talk about my fears, significant changes in my life, and my personal fear of change. I've always thought so much about the future instead of living in the present, it's just who I am. In some ways, it makes things easier, but in many ways, it's complicated my life. I feel as though I've done a good job of not letting my fears run my life, but I have let my fears make things difficult for myself when I should've been smarter and taken control of my feelings. The concept of intelligence and what being smart means is another thing I would like to use this book to talk about. Most people have been called stupid before, including me, and in my opinion, that's what's really stupid. I have a strong belief that we were all put on this planet for a different purpose, and that no one should be judged for what they feel like they were meant to do. Everyone is different, and I want to use this book to express that in my own way. Everyone should be able to say what they think and feel, and I want to use this collection of snapshots of my life to show people who I am and what I have to say about the topics I've chosen to write about. I also want to take this opportunity to tell people that they are not alone in their own personal fears, and that they are not alone in being afraid, or feeling stupid, or having trouble dealing with change. I want to give people something that they can relate to on a deep level, and really understand if they have the same feelings towards the topics that I talk about as I do. I would say that the overall theme of my book is fear and how you shouldn't let it run your life or make you feel stupid or bad about yourself in any way. This book is about how I overcame those feelings that fear put in me, and how I still struggle with them sometimes. This book is about the unknown, personal fear and how I fought it, the terrifying concept of change, what stupidity is and isn't, and what the future holds.

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The Unknown

People are afraid of what they don't know. It's a simple fact. I was terrified when I started at San Lorenzo Valley High School. I barely knew anyone, and it was after having gone to a tiny private school in Santa Cruz for nine years where there were sixteen kids in my grade, and we called all of our teachers by their first names. I came to SLV where there were about 150 kids in my grade, and everything was so different. I had never changed schools in my life. I was scared beyond belief. Luckily, I did know some of the kids there who very kindly helped me settle it, and I had known Mr. Guilford who I've had a developing father-daughter relationship with since I was eight years old. Still, everything was new and different and scary, and I'm lucky I had the friends that I did when I started.

The unknown is one of the scariest things that I know. It's one of the biggest fears I used to let take over my life and my actions, but I've had to learn to face this fear, and it has led me to great things. I'm thrilled that I chose the high school that I did. If I had wanted the least amount of change possible after eighth grade, I would've gone to Kirby where a large number of the kids from Gateway, the private school that I went to, went to for high school. I wanted to try something new. I was ready for a change. I don't regret my decision to go to the high school that I chose. SLV has already been a great experience for me, and although I do sometimes long for Gateway, private school, and the kids that I grew up with, I consider it a blessing to have gotten to know the incredible people that I have met at San Lorenzo Valley High School, and every day look forward to meeting more. I wonder how things would've been if I had chosen to continue with private schooling. I would've never gotten the chance to meet the people that I have, or go

to public school, I would've been stuck at a school with people who I was honestly getting sick of, and who were, I'm sure, getting really sick of me too.

I thank SLV and how kind it was to take me in and make me feel more comfortable than I ever thought I would. I feel less out of place every day, and love the school and all it has to offer. I miss Gateway, but I did the right thing. I accepted change and all of the good things that I knew it would do for me. I accepted the unknown. My fear of the unknown is not the only fear of mine that I have let take control of my life though, one of my biggest fears is of authority, the one fear of mine I can't ever see myself getting over, and the one fear of mine that I see as more of a positive than a negative.

Personal Fear

There are so many forms of fear. One of my worst fears, very possibly my worst, has always been my fear of authority. I work hard and have respected every teacher I've ever had very much, I always try my hardest to do the best that I can for adults who have authority over me. I want my teachers to like me, I think my fear is more a fear of authority not liking me. I've had this fear for as long as I can remember. It's made things hard for me at times, but really, I think it's made a lot of things better for me. I've always tried so hard to do well in school and in classes and activities outside of school so my teachers would like and respect me the way I like and respect them.

In some ways, I strongly believe that this fear is connected to and related to my fear of the unknown. I've never been an adult put in a high position of authority, and as a young teenager, what I see is an adult who has the power to fail me out of school, even though I know it won't happen. I don't recall ever having any teachers I was really really afraid of. It's more the concept of authority and the fact that some people have so much authority over me that is sometimes slightly intimidating. I know I'm a good kid and a hard worker, and really, I think it's my fear of authority that has pushed me towards having some of the better qualities that I have.

I'm very fortunate to have this particular fear over others. I've never been afraid of spiders, or the dark, or small spaces, or any really common fears really. Mainly just the unknown, authority, and change.

Change

People change over time. Some people change more dramatically than others. I changed for the better not so long ago. I changed over a fairly long period of time. It started in December of 2013. I had my first seizure at school right after running a mile down by the ocean for P.E. Almost exactly a year later, I got brain surgery to remove my right temporal lobe, my right hippocampus, and a benign tumor in the right side of my brain that was causing the epilepsy. During that year of epilepsy, I began to really start appreciating the people around me. My friends who were always there for me and stopped me from running into busy streets and jumping into pools when I was in the middle of having a seizure, my family who made sure to get me the medical attention I needed, and my teachers for insisting that I leave class to get headache medication. I came out of the whole experience with epilepsy and brain surgery a much stronger, more patient, more trusting, and more loving person. Change can be a good thing, and if it weren't for all of the medical difficulties that I had, I'm not sure if I ever would've completely understood exactly how much good change really can do for a person. Change is what takes us to where we need to be, to where we're meant to be. Whether it be a change in heart after a traumatic medical experience, or a change in schools, or a change in almost anything else, change can do you good, but only if you let it. I think everything that I went to was good for me. I appreciate all of the people who stayed right by my side the whole way through so much more now, and I'm so thankful every day that my tumor was benign, and that my medical complications weren't any worse. I'm lucky, and I was smart to allow the whole journey to change me the way that it did. I use the word smart so casually, but no one really knows for sure

what intelligence is, nor can anyone fully understand the meaning of stupidity. If you ask me, it's the concept of stupidity that's really stupid.

Stupidity

Stupidity seems to be another rather common fear. No one wants to feel stupid or be called stupid. What is stupidity? What is intelligence? For as long as I can remember, people have been telling me that my grades don't reflect how smart I am, and for as long as I can remember, I have wondered what does determine my level of intelligence. Some people say IQ tests, some people do say grades, but not many, I've heard people say that one's problem solving skills determine their intelligence. The human mind is so complex, and every person is smart in their own way. I've been called stupid, but I've also been called smart. I think most people at some point in their lives have been mocked and made fun of and have been called stupid. I remember a kid at my elementary school being called stupid by a fellow student because he didn't do well in P.E. and wasn't very athletic. This made no sense to me. How does your physical strength relate to your intelligence in any way? I have a very strong belief that everyone is smart in their own way, and in my opinion, it's the same with all animals.

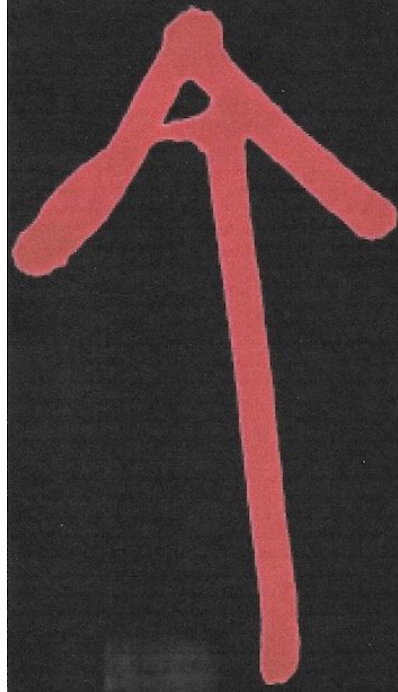
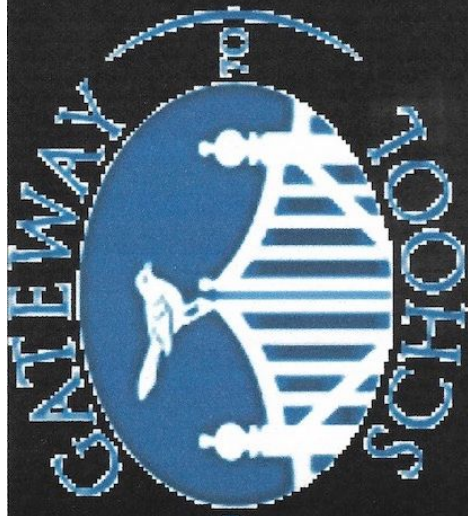
I remember very specifically an event that happened when I was about eight years old. My class went down by the beach where a marine biologist talked to us about ocean life. He talked a lot about dolphins, and finally told us that they're the second smartest animal on the planet. Someone asked what the most intelligent animal is, and he said, humans of course. I immediately began feeling quite angry, he started talking about how dolphins didn't invent the cell phone or the television, and all I kept thinking to myself is how ridiculous the concept was that we were smarter because we created mind-numbing machines to waste our time using all day, while dolphins are actively using their incredible adaptations to do what they figured out how to do themselves to make things easier.

We may have created and discovered some amazing things, but I still don't see how that makes us smarter than any other animal, we haven't figured out how to make our own webs, or hibernate, and we call ourselves smarter when we can't even understand what these beautiful animals are saying to each other. I personally find that quite ridiculous, and I have ever since that one day that I remember so well that was so long ago now it's unreal. I fear stupidity sometimes, and I also fear my future and that I won't be smart enough to make a good future for myself.

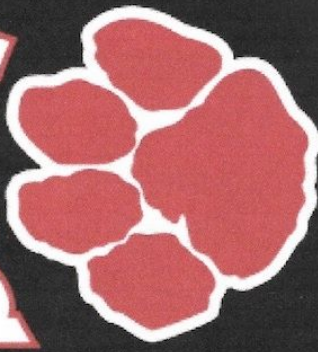
The Future

People ask me about my future a lot, and even though I have some solid ideas about what I want my future to look like, it's still a scary and confusing thing to talk about. I love talking to my mom about my future, she is so patient and helps me to think about my options. I remember the first time seeing someone getting their palm read, I was so young, and for a very brief moment, I believed it. I asked my parents about it, dying to know more, and they told me that they don't believe that any of it means anything, and that they definitely don't believe that it's real. They also told me that I should believe what I want to believe, not just then, but always. They told me to stay true to my beliefs, and stand up for them. I decided quickly that I didn't believe in any of it either, I didn't feel it was right for some stranger to be telling people what their future looks like, because all that does is plant an idea in the person's head of what their future is supposed to be, and then they may work way too hard to get to a place where they aren't happiest or where they don't feel at home.

I find it sad that some people let palm reading and stuff like that guide their lives, when there's so much more out there for them. I'm afraid of my future, but I'm not afraid enough to go to some random stranger and ask them what the inside of my hand says my adult life should be like. My parents have raised me to believe that I have to take control of my own future, and that is exactly what I strive to do every day. Another situation where I know that I can't let my fear run my life, and I won't. My future is all mine.



STV

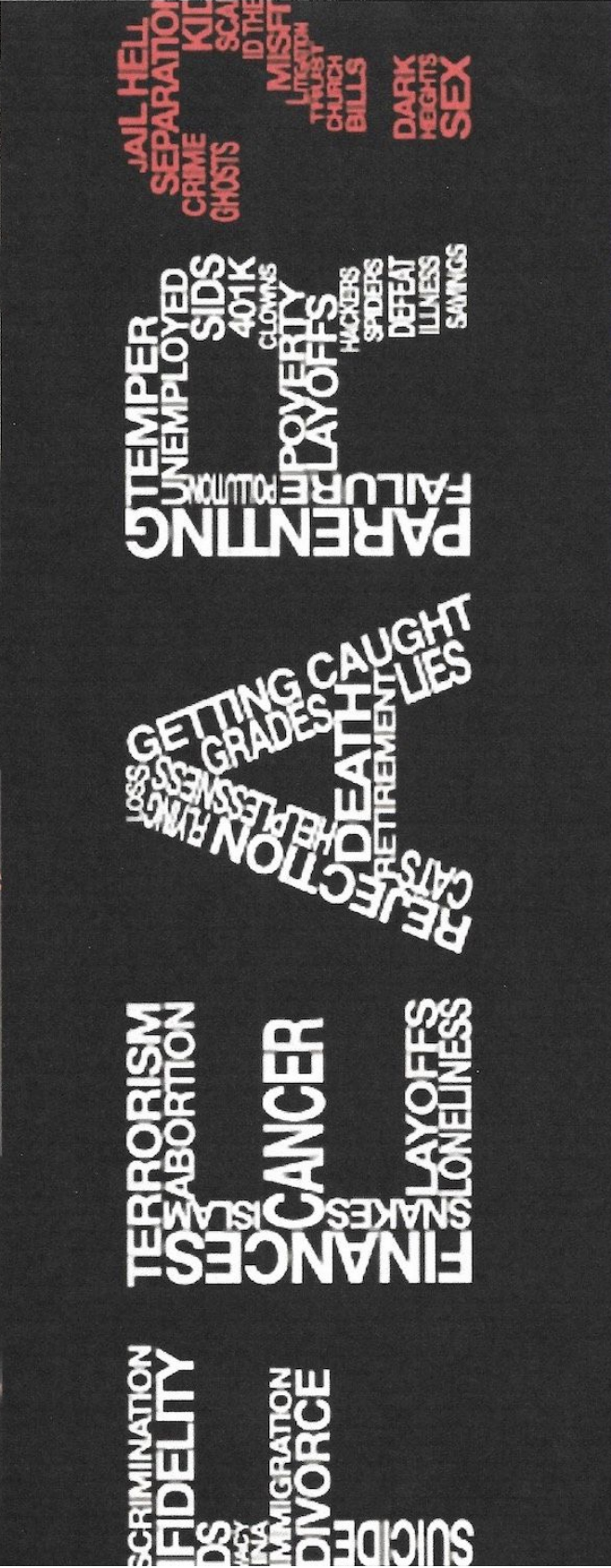


UNKNOWN

DON'T LET FEAR OF THE
UNKNOWN KEEP YOU FROM
CHANGING WHAT YOU KNOW
DOESN'T WORK.

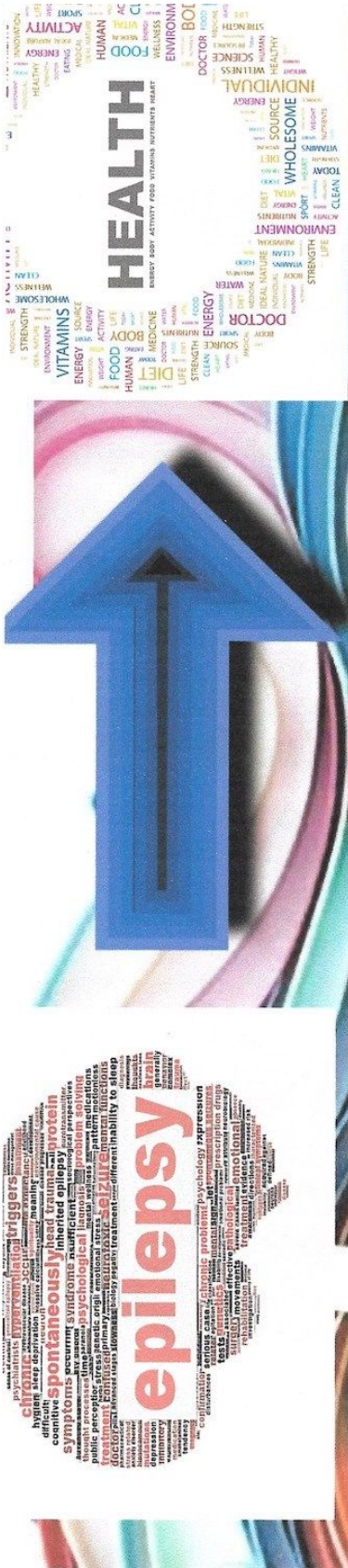
"We do not fear the unknown.
We fear what we think we know
about the unknown."

-TEAL SWAN-



FEAR IS PAIN
ARISING FROM THE
ANTICIPATION OF
EVIL.

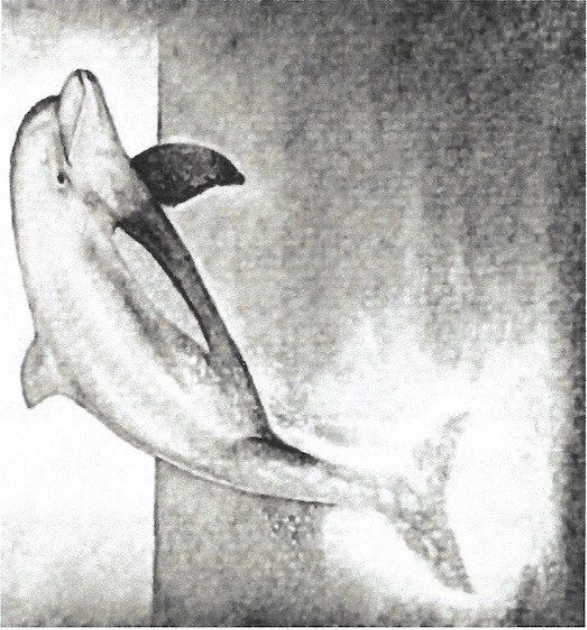
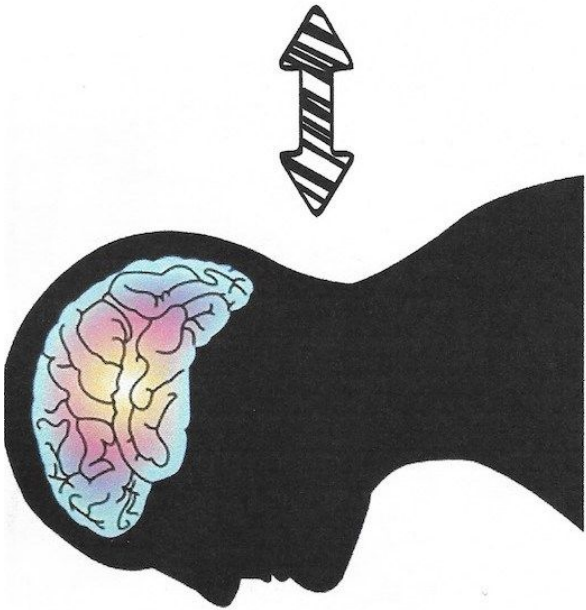
EVERYTHING
YOU WANT IS
ON THE OTHER
SIDE OF FEAR



change

DON'T FEAR
CHANGE.
CHANGE FEAR.

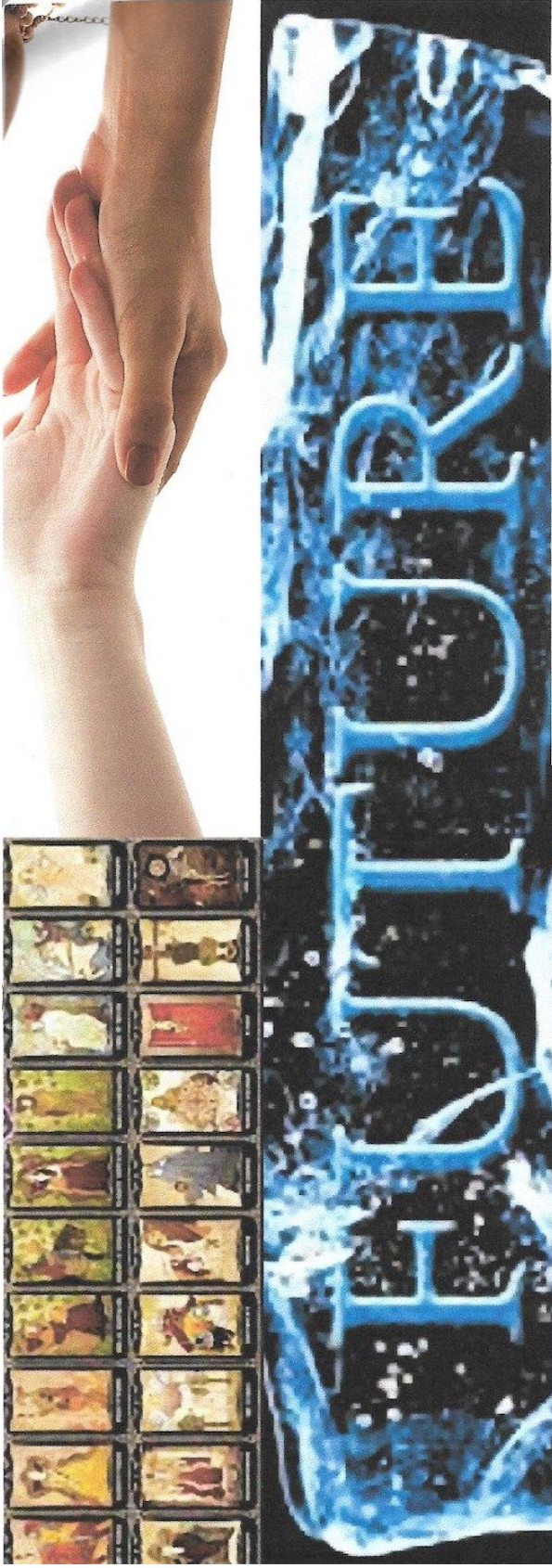
YOUR DESIRE TO
CHANGE MUST BE
GREATER THAN
YOUR DESIRE TO
STAY THE SAME



STUPID

**WE LIVE
IN THE ERA OF
SMART PHONES
AND
STUPID PEOPLE.**

**"It's always the
fear of looking
stupid that
stops you from
being awesome."**



YOUR FUTURE
IS WHATEVER
YOU MAKE IT,
SO MAKE IT A
GOOD ONE."

Dear past
thank you for
all the lessons.
Dear future,
I'm now ready