

Alex Muir – This I Believe Statement

I believe in sharing my knowledge with others. One of my favorite memories from high school was when I was in ninth grade and I helped out my friend Joey. We were both in geometry, and he was having a lot of trouble. Now, being the nerd that I was, I was having a relatively easy time (geometry actually excited me). He asked me one day if I could help him, and I took his request seriously. When I was a kid I used to hold a daily 'school' with my little sisters, and I taught them how to tell time, read sight words, etc. I figured this was the perfect time to actually 'play teacher' in a situation where the outcome really mattered.

What I did was go over his house every Wednesday after school and teach him the week's content in a way that he could understand. Sometimes, even though teachers are brilliant people, the way they present the content is rather muddy. However, when I go over that same content and put my own spin on it, I am almost always able to get a positive reaction. The same thing happened here. He really understood what I was saying, and it got to the point where I would make practice tests and quizzes for him in order to prepare him for the real thing. I literally sat down and created and solved problems from scratch, and I loved every minute of it. I remember talking to my teacher, and he said he was saving my practice tests to steal some questions for the test next year. In the end, I brought Joey's grade from a D to a B+.

This experience is very representative of the way that I am as a person. To this day, in every class I attend, I subconsciously watch for signs of people having trouble with a particular concept and instantly jump at the opportunity. The cool thing about this is that, normally, the person truly understands the topic once we've finished chatting. Every time I see somebody struggle, I use the opportunity to share my knowledge in a way that makes sense to them. And, every time, I feel great when I am done.

This action has come to define who I am. I really enjoy...not teaching, but helping people to understand. I enjoy sharing what I know. When I spoke as NHS President to the new inductees in January 2013, I said that knowledge means absolutely *nothing* unless it is used in the right ways. I believe that sharing is the correct way to use knowledge. Sharing knowledge, as opposed to confining it to oneself, is the only way that someone can be truly knowledgeable. I believe that, if I was given the gift of understanding (and it is a gift, if not luck, with some concepts), that it is my duty to share that understanding with others.