

A Boost Of Literacy

By: Tia Roberts

"Tia can you read the next page?"

The conversations between my mind and mouth are totally different.

"No thank you."

"You can read, you know how to."

What my mind can process my lips cannot. The way all the words easily scan through my brain and make some type of sense is fascinating. Pretty amazing compared to the way my lips don't catch up.

Inside my head, I realize, if you read too slow your mind will not comprehend if you read too fast your lips will not follow. Choose what you want and choose wisely cause both may cause harm but one can be deadly. The way others may perceive you and address you can all depend on this one act of reading. So I go with my mind and read silently in my head, only one to hear a noise is the brain inside my head. It tells my lips to stay shut as my mind will do all the work. Lay back and realize as I get everything packed and understood. But later on, you still will be faced with the question;

"Why do you not want to read?"

Maybe is because people can not hear the lavish voice that comes from inside my head but only the stuttering, heart racing chatter that does not ever decides if it wants to come out.

"I just don't feel like it."

When in reality I was fully capable of reading out loud. It's just the fear of stuttering in front of the class that haunts me. Making excuses for the problems that I have going on and to think this all can race through a person's mind within one English class period.

It's something about a classroom; the cold walls all seem to fall in on you. The words become louder, piercing your ears with your deepest fears. Your breaths begin to shorten and you feel a sudden clog in your throat. As the intensity of the look that the teacher was giving me becomes even more intimidating. It reminded me of a story by Gloria Anzaldua called, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." She said, "we internalize identification, especially in forms of images and emotions." It was something that was happening to me. As everybody decides to look at my overly self-conscious self sitting there with no words. Then being labeled as dumb, or incapable of reading by all your peers. People do not understand the intensity of literature. It is not only the way you write or talk but the way you read or self identify. Literature can have a major impact on you and who you represent yourself as. It affects the way people treat you and the way you encounter others. "Yet the struggle of identities continues," said by Anzaldua. This is because many people don't realize what people go through on the inside. We analyze their appearance and abilities in certain things and draw our own conclusions to what we think they might be like. We never give people chances; that is why I believe my literature controls my tongue and allows my mind run free. In fear of being judged and criticized for who I am.

"Yo child"

The term of slang I use whenever I'm talking with my friends. There's never a time in the conversation for second guessing. My tongue runs free with all opportunities. No time to care for the simple mistakes I make because I know there is no pressure of perfection placed upon me. I know that I can always be myself without trying too hard to impress anybody with my ability to speak on higher levels. Short and sweet always keeps the conversation going.

“Goodmorning, do we have anything specific to do today?”

The language transforms to something I feel is more accepted by my teachers. No grammar mistakes or incorrect pronunciations will be acceptable for English class.

“You should know this stuff, you're in eleventh grade!”

“Your right. But not everything is as easy for me as it is for you.”

As Anzaldua says, “I will no longer be made to feel ashamed.” Because I know my limits and stuff that I am not so strongly in. Yes, I am a native speaker but that does not make English easy for me. English is the class I struggle with the most. Maybe my self-consciousness sets me back or maybe I just am not the best reader and writer. But it is not my fault. It is not a bad thing either, it is one of my weakness which is something I accept and work on everyday to get better.

So, I am okay with the piercing eyes watching me, and the tighter the walls close in. I can deal with the heavy breathes and clogging throats, all to get over what was a fear. I have come to realize that literature is way more than how people perceive your abilities to do good in reading and writing. I take literature as a journey through the world that is not always easy but in the end, you will always gain something from it, self-confidence and the ability to use your fears as power.