

My autobiography essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I come from a family of four; my dad, mum, brother and I. I am older than my brother by three years. In most part of my life, I have lived in two towns; a small one, and a relatively larger one. The numerous diverse events that took place in my life as I grew up have shaped me into who I am today. The small town had a population of about three thousand residents, while the larger one had more than 155, 000 people.

My father was the sole bread winner in those days when I was growing up. Back then, layoffs were very common, and that is when I came to learn about the powers employers have on their employees. Talks concerning unemployment insurance (the name given to layoffs back then) were common especially over dinners. As you can expect, this lifestyle was stressing many people, who were not certain about their future at their places of work. I can remember, my mom rationing food for us in order to save for the next day.

Later on, as a teenager, I was actively involved in the council of high school students. I had a vision of pursuing tertiary level studies, but along the way, numerous, circumstances and decisions influenced the path that I took. I had to come up with another strategy, as soon as I realized that my family was not able to raise money for me to further my education at post secondary level. You can imagine how I felt; I was so devastated. My long time desire and dream of joining a tertiary level institution had come to an end.

Another occasion that changed my life forever was my marriage to my long time girlfriend Sophia in 1988, at a tender age of only 18 years. Even though it was clear to me from the start, that I had to pursue higher education first

until I finish, before embarking on any other thing, something happened that made me change my earlier decision. My counselor in high school hinted to me that if I would get married before the graduation day, the chances that I would be given more funds to assist me financially in pursuing further studies were higher as opposed to single students. On hearing that, I quickly explained things to my girlfriend, who understood and we got married. Nothing would stand in my way of pursuing further education, because I was determined to get it at whatever cost. You can imagine the reaction of my teachers when I told them of my plans of getting married; some openly objected my plans, while others were puzzled. Finally, I was given a student loan worth \$500, and it was now time for me to make my dream come true. The town where I lived was small, and as you expect, no institutions of post secondary education were available, so I had to change place of residence in pursuit of advanced education. Unsurprisingly, my dream of pursuing further education was crushed once more.

With no other alternatives in place to see me through my pursuit for further studies, I carried on my doing menial jobs within the town. In the process, I was lucky to be employed in a day care within the locality. This was a private home, and my work involved caring for between four and six children at one time. Since we were still young, my wife and I decided to postpone the issue of children. I will be lying if I deny that at some point I did long for children of my own, especially after caring for children of other people in my place of work since, 1989 (September). This feeling changed our earlier plans; my wife and I decided to have a family of our own; in 1991 (May), our first born was born I continued with my work at the day care, as my wife stayed at

home taking care of the baby. When the baby was about one year old, my wife got a job as a secretary in a local firm.

Her getting the job came as a surprise to me, but at the same time it was a relief since I could now think of going back to school to pursue further studies. In 1992 (September), I relocated to Manitoba, a much larger town than where I grew up, to pursue further education, leaving my family behind. Things happened so fast, before I realized it, I had serious health problems in 1993 (February), which necessitated that I be hospitalized. This came at the wrong time, when exams were going on. My lecturers did not want to hear any of it; I therefore did not get the opportunity for a retake of the exams. I was so stressed up, not knowing what to do. Something told me that I could do nothing to change the way things were, so I decided to quit my studies (I was studying to be an X-ray technologist). I was lucky that I still saved some money out of the student loan I was given. I went back home to my family, with the thought of enrolling in a course in aesthetics; I have always loved the field of beauty and cosmetics since I was a child. After successfully completing the course, I opened business that dealt with nailing and tanning in the year 1993. Since my business was based at home, I decided to go back to seek for employment at the day care, where I worked previously.

In 1995 (March), my second child was born. The same year in September, my first born started going to school. I also managed to get a part time job at the French Catholic elementary school where I enrolled my daughter. In addition, I attended training, where teachers were taught on techniques of handling firearms. This was to later be an opportunity for self employment up to 2003.

In the year 1998, the ministry of Manitoba, made the decision to merge all the boards of schools, and consequently, employees united. Afterwards, I grew to be a member of the Teacher's Federation of Manitoba Secondary School. Luck was on my side; I received a nomination and consequently chosen for the position of mediator for bargaining unit, located in district A, at the annual general meeting. My involvement in the federation became the turning point in my life, and from there, my life took a new direction. I got various jobs of union posts at the provincial, district and even local levels. In the year 1999, I was chosen for a position that took two years, at the province in the educational support staff sector.

Being a board member of French Catholic School gave me the courage to apply for a permanent post of educational assistant at the French public secondary school, towards the end of 1999. In the interview, I emerged the as the best candidate, with the highest qualifications. Consequently, I decided to take a leave from the board, while maintaining every single one of my right. Unfortunately, the principal of the school found out, and I was fired just a day prior to completing my probation (3 months). I decided to challenge the decision of the board by filing a grievance case.

While still an employee at the board, I had placed a bid for the post of officer in communications in district B, and I was lucky to get the post. I took over the post, which I occupied until year end. The fact that my case was continuing, gave me a voice in the activities of the board, and I remained very active. At the annual general meeting, I was lucky to be nominated for the post of president. To my surprise, I was taken out of the meeting by the secretariat from our provincial office. He asked me not to accept the

nomination based on the fact that I had no guarantee that my case would be successful. It was clear that some people wanted me to decline the offer; my rights were being violated right before my eyes. The incident gave me the drive to want to know more about workers rights. I had the determination to further my education concerning the laws governing workers, workers unions as well as employers.

I found myself with no job, during the time when my case was being handled. I decided to seek for a temporary post at the French Catholic Board at the elementary school. In 2000 (September), my case was settled, and I got a full time job at the French Catholic School Board. Over the years, my association with the union, has been ongoing, occupying different positions such as chief negotiator, communications officer, area representative, just to mention but a few. I have also not been left behind when it comes to committee membership; I have been actively involved in local committees such as grievance appeals, finance, anti- harassment, collective bargaining and constitution among others.

At the district rank, I have held the position of delegate, secretary as well as provincial councilor. I am not left behind provincially, where my participation has been extended to the council of parliament and the constitution, which necessitates that I be a member of the provincial council. This year has been a busy and an active year for me. I made applications for two posts at the teacher's federation, which was a learning opportunity for me. I realized that being elected in such positions would not be an easy task, without the experience of either a grievance officer or president. In June this year, I was

chosen as the vice president of federation of teachers, a position which saw me draw closer to the presidency.

However, I declined to vie for the presidency post, because, something tells me that this is not my time. I have a strong belief that in the coming two years, I will have gained the necessary background knowledge and experience that I will need to run the board, as their president. In addition, I expect to accomplish my BA degree in Labor Studies.

While detailing all the activities that I have participated in, one thing is certain; I have a passion in advocating for the rights of workers. I find joy in seeing growth of associations since the merging of boards of schools. As I continue to gain more knowledge on the rights of workers, I also appreciate the leadership skills from the executive, which has been instrumental in educating members. I am more than confident and certain that my current pursuit of education will not only be beneficial to me but also to the teachers' federation I intend to lead one day.