

I started writing my English paper on the most effective teacher I have ever had, and wondered how I was going to sum up all she has taught me in only 400 words. The teacher I speak of is not a teacher in the most conventional sense of the word, but actually a driving instructor. Some may wonder how a driving instructor could possibly be the most effective teacher I have ever had, but she truly has been. She didn't just teach me to drive, which quite frankly would have been a miracle in itself, she taught me how to live again.

I had always had a fear of driving, even sitting in the passenger's seat of my mother's car would bring on anxiety attacks. I was twenty two years old, living on my own with my son when I said, "enough is enough, this is a fear I have to face". I went to Abegweitt School of Driving, and told the owner the predicament I was in. She then decided it would be best for her to be my instructor, as I was extremely nervous and she had a lot of experience. I was worried about the cost of the lessons, but she told me not to concentrate on that for the time being, we had to take things one step at a time and overcoming my fear was going to be the first step.

During my first lesson I didn't even get the chance to sit in the driver's seat. I was still way too tense, so the instructor pulled over onto the side of the road, and taught me some breathing techniques that I could use to calm myself down. These techniques helped out tremendously, not just in driving, but in everyday life. After that lesson I was off, extremely slow at first, but driving just the same. She taught me my turns, reversing, even how to pump my own gas. I felt so amazing, this fear had held me back for so long, and now I had faced it, head on, I was driving.

The instructor and I became very close. The lessons lasted over a year, and with each lesson our conversations became more, and more in depth. I had gone through a lot of hardships in the past couple years, and for some reason I could talk to her about these things. We talked about the death of my twin sister, my parents breakup, and about my son. At that time, I was extremely afraid to leave my son with anyone, even leaving him with my sister for an hour would tie my stomach into knots. I was afraid that if I wasn't with him, every second of every day, that something terrible might happen to him. She explained things to me in a way that no one else ever did. She made me realize how afraid I actually was of everything and how much I was letting it hold me back.

That's how I ended up here. I had talked with my instructor about my plans for the future. I was going to take the safe route of working up enough hours to get on unemployment, so that they would help me pay my way through college, after that I could work for a couple of years and save up money to go to university and get a degree in psychology, which is what I really wanted to do. She talked to me about the thousands of people everyday that give up their dreams, and take the safe route through life. She asked me why I would do this, why not just skip all the other stuff and go straight to university? I might have to pay back a lot of money in the end, but it would be worth it. I took her advice and that is why I sit here today, writing my English paper, in hopes of a better tomorrow. So, you see a driving instructor can be an extremely effective teacher, just look at the impact this one has had on my life.