



ashley's avenue

By Ashley Murphy

As far back as I can remember I've had dreams and aspirations. Some of those were silly childhood dreams and some are aspirations that I still create today. Some I've accepted will never come true, but it isn't that easy to let them go. They always play on the back of your mind and inspire you, and push you. No matter how silly or how far-fetched they may seem, they are your dreams and a part of what makes up... you.

When I was younger, I wanted to be a princess. But what little girl doesn't? They watch Disney movies and see the magic and the leading lady talking to animals, meeting a handsome

prince, wearing beautiful clothes, and having the fairy tale ending. The parents then buy them the dress up clothes so they can pretend to be Cinderella, Snow White, or Ariel. When bedtime comes, the fancy dresses come off and they are just a little girl again, but when their heads hit the pillow, the dream of becoming a princess keeps them sleeping sound all night long. Of course, my dream of becoming a princess never came true, but the thought of how it made me feel still puts a smile on my face.

The thing about dreams is that they are constantly changing. When I moved on up to elementary school,

my dream of becoming a princess subsided and was replaced with my new dream of becoming a teacher. All through elementary school I got along very well with my teachers and they made teaching fun. They inspired me and I held on to that dream for several years.

On top of that, I moved to Singapore when I was in the fourth grade and had my first real traveling experience. When our family moved back, I knew immediately that I would miss the constant packing and unpacking. While traveling can be very hectic and time consuming, it is still something I love to do today. While I don't get to take the international and cross-country trips by plane that I used to be able to do, I try to plan weekend driving trips as often as possible. Even if its only two hours away, I love to be able to get out of Cleveland, be on my

own, and have new memorable adventures.

Since my aspirations of becoming a teacher, my prospects changed to a doctor, a plastic surgeon, a hairstylist, an interior designer, a fashion designer, and now most recently, a radiologist and a news anchor. I had all intentions my senior year of high school to go to the Art Institute in Atlanta, GA to pursue fashion design. I ran into several obstacles and opposition from some of my family. Having that door closed pushed me to make a decision about which local college to attend and I settled on the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga. Again, I ran into more obstacles, this time created by myself. I interrupted my dreams to please someone else, for a few years actually, and what I thought I wanted at the time. Now, I highly regret many of those decisions that I had made.

I still tend to laugh at my brothers and sisters and some of my friends when they tell me their dreams and what they aspire to be some day. Especially when they seem a little far-fetched, but then it gets me to thinking about how these aspirations could actually come true for them. This in turn makes me wish I was more confident in myself and see the things they see so that I can continue to believe that my dreams will still come true one day.

So, when your little girls are dreaming of becoming princesses or teachers and your little boys are dreaming of becoming astronauts or firefighters, don't discourage them. Let them dream what they wish to dream, but most likely their dreams will eventually change. Make sure they know that you will always be there to support them. Whether they want to be a musician, a surgeon, a re-

porter, or even if they want to join the military, your kids will always come to you first. Even when they are old enough to make a responsible decision for themselves, they will still seek your approval.

Dreamers, don't let anyone hold you back on what you aspire to be and don't put your aspirations on hold for someone else or anyone that doesn't agree. This is the only life you have to live, so live it for you.

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." - Henry David Thoreau

Questions or comments about Ashley's Avenue? E-mail Ashley at: peoplenewsdesk@aol.com

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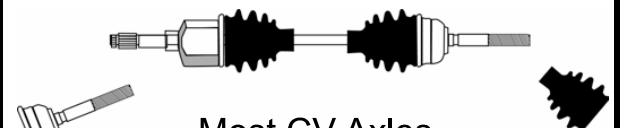
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