

# What is a Passionate Pursuit?



Back in my college days, after spell check relaxed me enough to begin thinking about composition, rather than getting flunked on spelling alone... I was considered a pretty decent writer. Unfortunately for me, at the time, I wanted to be considered a pretty good painter, and somehow the two did not blend seamlessly together.

I honestly don't completely understand why writing became important to me. Growing up, it was part of a tandem that terrified me. Let me explain that a little bit. Maybe if this makes sense to you, then the whole blog will start snapping into place.

From my earliest days on this earth, I was generally considered a bright child. Precocious, energetic, and artistically talented.

Dad made a point of reading me the funnies every evening before dinner. He bought an entire encyclopedia set to get a collection of children classics that went along with it. I still love some of those stories.

But then came the move over Christmas of my first grade year. I do believe the year was 1969. I loved traveling so the move itself wasn't a problem, but when we landed in our new hometown... well things were different. How you might ask... well this is a blog not an encyclopedia. Those answers will have to come out one post at a time. I can say, however, the change I am going to focus on here, probably was the most crippling for me.

I remember my parents discussing and arguing about school issues that entire break after arriving in the town. I don't know who was in favor of what... but I know they both had different Ideas about which school I should got to.

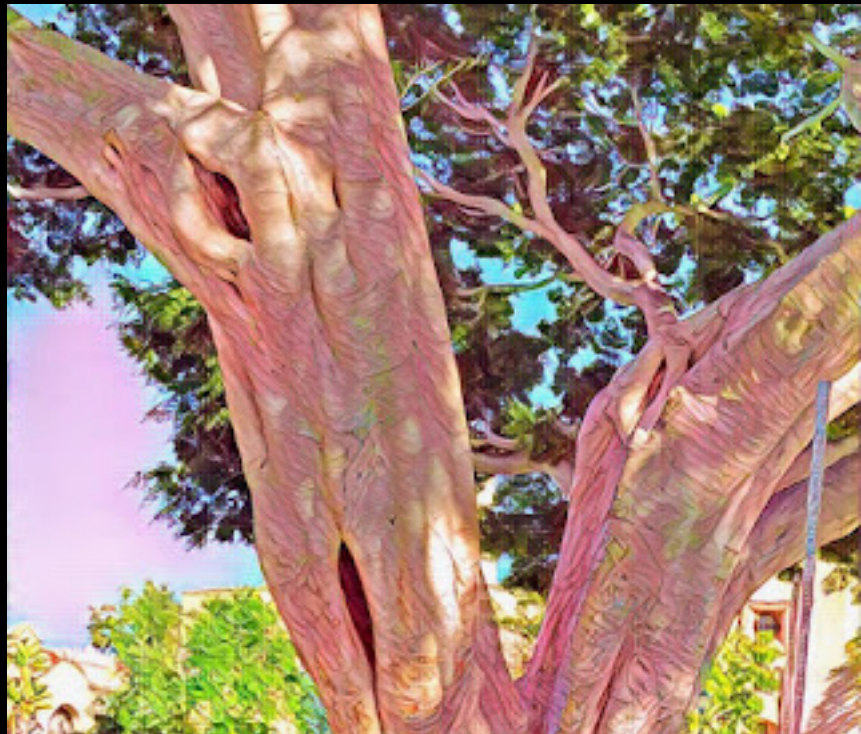
In the end, a small private school was chosen. It was about 10 blocks from the house we were living in. It was, by 1969 standards, a pretty modern building. They (The School) embraced all sorts of experimental ways of doing things. New science, new math, and a phonetic based English course to teach reading. I already read ok. All those cartoons and children's books had helped me a lot. Unfortunately in this new way of doing things, not even the alphabet looked the same. Suddenly not only did I need to learn something completely new, I had to unlearn something I knew very well. It served no purpose in this new language they were insisting we learn.

Overnight, I went from being one of the fastest readers in my class at the old school to be put in the slow readers group of the new school. It was so bad, My days off were being spent at home with mom forcing me to read the new way for hours each day... no fun no play it seemed... I had to sound out my way through 15 pages a day it seemed. God I learned to hate homework that year. Math I was a wiz at, art I had no peer. Sadly art ain't cool in an elementary school on the great plains. And even though I was pretty good at everything in gym... I liked sports teams no one there ever had heard of... so I was on the outs there too. God that school sucked.

I struggled with the new language through second and the start of third grade. By then I remember I couldn't even ride home on the bus any longer, I simply hated it. I'd sneak out the back door and walk home. I much preferred talking to the trees than getting punched on the bus.

Then in the middle of third grade, out went the language from Mars, and in came English again... sadly... by this time, I couldn't remember a thing I had learned. I couldn't spell, and I really really didn't want to learn. Yes, I know it sat me back across the board. Yes, I know I was completely out of touch with everyone else. I really didn't care, I was a bitter old man by the time I was 9 years old. God that sounds sad. But it was true. We got scholastic book club order sheets every month in school. I'd order 4 or 5 books each time they came. I'd try to read them, but they almost looked Chinese to me. Meaningless shapes typed I to a page.

I think it was in the 4th grade, I bought a book labeled "Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators in the Mystery of the Green Ghost". I bought it, because I knew Alfred Hitchcock and the kids lived in Los Angeles, the last town I had enjoyed life in. But even with that going for it, I couldn't read. But for some reason it never was very far from my hand. Literally years went by. Not a dent in a single book. 5-6-7 grade. Summer of 8th grade... disaster struck... the farm behind my house, started growing milo. It was discovered I as highly allergic... so, it was destined to be a summer locked in the house with nothing to do...



I wasn't even fond of the TV shows back then. All we got in the day time were game shows. So I slayed in bed most of the day til I couldn't stand looking at acoustic texture on the ceiling. That's when I turned to my book shelf and saw that old copy of [Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators in the Mystery of the Green Ghost](#)... I remember

thinking. It couldn't be any worse than getting a tooth pulled. So I grabbed it and started to struggle through. I think the first page took me an hour to read. But the second went faster, and the third faster yet. By the time mom and dad got home... I had read a whole chapter. I think it took me a week of struggle to get through that book. And yes, I know it was written for about a 4th grader. But I enjoyed it. It brought images to mind, I hadn't seen in 10 years. I felt like I was home running through the streets of Huntington Beach and visiting the mansions in the Hollywood Hills. I finished the book, and I wanted to read the next one. It took me away to a place I wanted to go.

Mom and dad came home that evening and I asked if we could go to the book store, I wanted to get a book. I think they nearly fainted. But no question about it, we drove down to B Daltons that evening and bought 3 more of the series. By Summer's end, I had read the entire series cover to cover. And while I wasn't going to win any awards for my English skills. I was at least joining the human race. This is what a passionate pursuit is all about. Thank you for reading.