

Leaps of Faith

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You do not know what you want to do with the rest of your life.

You are entering college, graduating from high school with honors, and feel yourself torn in a thousand different directions. Your family wants you to do something “practical,” they say—“something that will earn you a steady income.”

You want that, too.

And yet.

You have always loved reading, and you have *always* loved writing. From scrawled narratives in the margins of worksheets filled with fractions to charted story trajectories in cursive-lined notebooks.

You tell yourself that writing is in your blood.

Do you want to commit yourself to that, though? What if you’re *not* as good at writing as you hope you are?

You do it.

You arrive at Western Kentucky University with bright eyes and shaking hands. You register for classes, nodding along as your new professors recommend this class and that class. You apply for scholarships, cringing at each first draft and then watching the words come together right before your eyes.

The first day of class comes, months after you have committed to your decision, and you take your first step inside an English classroom. It is a literature survey with a professor who possesses a special affinity for Kentucky barbecue. Suddenly, you are immersed in the process of diving into texts, turning them inside out, and reading through the subtleties and nuances. Now, more than ever, you’re confident that you made the right decision.

“I’m an English major,” you begin telling people, a beaming grin on your face.

But, despite your enthusiasm and love for literature, people still get that look in their eye—one you ultimately become quite familiar with.

“So,” they’ll say, “do you want to teach?”

You don’t want to teach, though, and you tell them as much.

They nod—of course they do—but you know that they’re wondering, “What, then, will you do?”

In your second semester of your freshman year, you take your first composition class. You’ve always loved to write, but this is something else. This is taking the English language and putting it in your own hands. As the semesters pass, you take more and more composition classes and know, deep in your soul, that *this* is what you want to do: business writing, grant writing, editing and publishing, and so much more. You have found your calling, the thing you love most, and you want to learn as much about the craft from as many different perspectives as possible.

Your love for reading, writing, and learning is not limited to the classroom, though.

You study abroad, studying Shakespeare in his own theatre and exploring the English countryside as it is represented in literature.

You attend conferences, sharing your work with your friends and peers alike.

You begin working in the WKU Writing Center under the guidance of a fearless leader. You work with students each and every day to help them build confidence in their own words—helping them find confidence in themselves. From there, you decide to work for the university’s student newspaper: telling stories grounded in truth. You move forward and work one-on-one with a professor to assist in a project close to your heart. The opportunities for you in the WKU Department of English don’t end there, though: you take on two internships through the department and find your calling. You love every minute of each experience—pushing on and pushing forward.

Throughout your time in the department, which is beginning to come to a close, a rewarding and supportive faculty surrounds you. They are there for you and your peers to give you feedback and strength when you need it. You have learned an endless number of things from them, from your early days as a wide-eyed freshman to a senior standing on graduation’s threshold, and you are the better for it.

As you begin filling out job applications and forging your way to the future, you know you would not be here without that initial decision: that leap of faith. Because that, at its core, is what English is all about: having faith in yourself, having faith in your trade, and having faith in that next step.