

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

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“The circle of life!

It moves us all, through despair and hope, through faith and love.

Till we find our place, on the path unwinding.

In the circle, the circle of life.”

-Tim Rice

Disney's *The Lion King* is my favorite childhood movie. Watching it brings back childhood memories of watching it with my family and receiving stuffed plush of all the characters from my grandma. I do not realize how applicable the movie's theme song, “The Circle of Life,” is to my life. Not only *is* it my life (I will live, give life to some children, and die), but it is how I live my life. I know that “The Circle of Life” describes my life dedicated to helping others.

Walking into the classroom for the first time, I can see the children's inquiring faces looking up at me, a stranger. Their eyes question my presence in their classroom but light up in wonder at the mystery presented to them. The teacher notices my entrance, pauses from her teaching, and looks up at me to give me a welcoming smile. I come to this classroom twice a week during my study hall to work with children as a tutor and friend. The teacher introduces me and I tell the eager second graders a little about myself. As their arms almost fall off from raising their hands for so long to ask their very important questions, I wonder: *How am I going to learn all these names now and when I become a teacher? Will I be able to be a good teacher?*

Several months later, I reenter the room for what seems like the pleasant millionth time. The children greet me with a “Hi, Miss Katrina!” I respond, knowing everyone's name now, “Hi, Jack! How was the book you were reading last week?” I cannot believe how attached I have become to these students; it is as if I have become their teacher, and I only see them a few times a week for a half an hour. *Is this what it feels like to be an everyday teacher?*; if so, I cannot wait to graduate from college with a degree allowing me to teach. I begin my routine walk around the classroom to make sure every student is doing independent work. I help a few students get back on track, encourage those who need inspiration, and congratulate those who finished their independent assignments already.

As I continue to help these children, I look back at what I have done so far this year. I have helped students with math, reading, spelling, writing, self-esteem, attitude, honesty, and perseverance. By helping them, I know that I am contributing to the circle of learning. I have received educational inspiration from many teachers I have had. Now I am helping to educate these students. As I have helped these students learn about themselves, they have helped me to learn about myself. They have helped me to see the skills needed to teach students in the future. The practices I have used in educating these students and the ones I have observed the teachers using will come back to me in the future when they are needed.

In addition, I hope that by helping these students, they will be able to complete their

circle of life and help others as I have helped them. By helping them, hopefully, they now feel the desire to help others using some of life's lessons I instilled in them. I helped one student overcome some reading and writing obstacles, taking the time to help him focus on his work and to sound out and spell back his words. He then was able to write a thank you letter for the eye doctor that had visited their class. As he finished his letter and got up to join his class, he said, "Thank you for helping me!" Now, he has the ability to work through obstacles in order to overcome them. Hopefully, based on my example, he will help someone else in a similar way as I helped him. Then, I will be able to say to him, "No, thank *you* for helping others!"

As Timon and Pumba were there for Simba, singing "Hakuna Matata" in my favorite childhood movie, I have been there for these students, helping them to achieve their dreams and goals as I have begun to achieve mine. I have been moved to help others; I have found my path as a teacher. As Simba realized that all of his fellow lions needed to learn to live and work together, I realize that helping others and utilizing teamwork is not only a part of life but it is my true enjoyment of life. I hope that, with my help, the students feel as if they have "no worries" about school and their future, just as Timon and Pumba tried to instruct this lesson to Simba. While the amicable duo sings, "It means no worries, for the rest of your days," I realize how few worries I have when I am helping others. When I am helping others, my worries disappear; I happily concentrate all my energies on helping them. In conclusion, I receive much happiness from helping others and accepting help when needed. I hope that the students I help will be happy, and I hope that they will continue to pass along their happiness by helping others in the circle of life. As Flora Edwards said, "in helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us."