

For almost all of my life, I have been writing. I have written reports, journal entries, ideas and emotions on any imaginable piece of paper I have within reach, legal documents, two tech books, medical literature for journals and lots of news reporting. I have written obituaries for strangers and loved ones like my mom. I have written nice, wonderful things and I have pissed off a lot of people. Such is the life of a writer.

While in the communications college at the University of Tennessee, I was in the throws of learning how to live with bipolar disorder. If that word scares you, I don't care. It is what I have to deal with and I am not hiding it anymore. So, while attending UTK I was mentally suffering greatly but pressing on to prove that I am capable of withstanding the odds and pressed on to earn a degree. I did.

But while there, I was in a crisis. Or at least one of them. I prayed to God, which is really just speaking to him like I would anyone else. I was doing that old thing that people do when they are desperate.

"If you can see me through this and I do get my degree, I will devote my writing to your will."

I graduated of course, but nothing came to me as a direction to write for His purpose. I have been blank ever since. I ask Him occasionally for direction, a slap in the head, anything to show me the obvious. Nothing. I have even stopped writing for an extended period. I have nothing, for Him or myself.

My last conversation with my mom before she suddenly passed was a nice one. Neither of us knew she would die the following week. She became adamant about pushing me to write again. I don't know where or why that came from but she was almost pleading me to pick it back up. I told her I would love to but I have nothing to write about. Nothing. Her very last words to me before we ended the call was, if just for her, "please start writing again."

Since then, picking up my proverbial pen has been on my mind. My life began changing immensely as well and I have been preoccupied. I am leaving my wife, fighting for my assets, learning to live with a newly rebuilt titanium spine and its new own brand of pain. At least I can walk tall again. I am getting out and meeting new friends, seeking new activities and all while I am living in a room which is the most toxic YMCA type situation one can endure. But that is not my point.

In preparing for my next stage of life, maybe my last, I have decided to secure my place as a good man. Sure they finish last or not at all, but after much soul searching, I intend to not compromise. Among the many qualities of a good man, love is paramount in my opinion. I am giving in and officially recognizing a quality I have always possessed. A quality and belief system I have always harbored. It has served me well and tortured me as well.

I believe unequivocally in love. I will not give up on love.

Love is not just one thing. There is not just one type of love. Biblically, love is separated into four types. I am sure people would like to add or take away from these definitions, but in my eyes, God is the one to look to for love. He defines it, not some expert on love lurking on the web or on Facebook.

The four loves as defined by God are Eros, Storge, Philia, and the most important Agape.

I won't delve into a thesis on each. Eros is romantic and sensual love. The kind between a man and a woman. Storge, pronounced STOR-jay, is familial love. The kind of bond found in families and its members. Philia is a Christian love for other Christians, all people and especially love for those in need. It is supportive. Finally, there is Agape (Uh-gah-pay). Agape love is unmeasurable, infinite, unconditional and pure. Agape, is love for humankind. It has no ends.

Since I have begun my new paths and I am freed up from so much of the weight of life I have carried for so long, and the fact that I have become to love myself, I have been experiencing empathic episodes and feeling emotions I hardly recognize. I am going to begin a nonlinear but a experiential path of writings on love. I want to explore it, share it, explain why I cry and laugh about it. Love needs to be said. Said more often. Love must be recognized and made a priority.

Let's move forward.