

You will need to carefully read the selection below and complete various activities using the essay as your basis.

Using the highlight function on your computer, you will need to mark the essay below. It will be necessary for you to read the essay several times to fully understand the essay and complete the markings in such a way that demonstrates a close reading of the essay. You will need to use the following chart to correctly mark the essay.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Highlight Color | Item to be identified | Use an X to indicate you have accomplished this task. Use NA if this task did not apply to this essay. |
| PINK | Mark the main idea of the essay. |  |
| AQUA | Mark key examples/ support for the main idea/ theme of the essay. |  |
| GREEN | Mark statements that you agree with . |  |
| YELLOW | Mark statements that are new to you or make you think in a new way. |  |
| RED | Mark statements in the essay that you disagree with. |  |
| GRAY | Mark terms/ concepts that you found difficult to understand. |  |

The time I began reading and marking this assignment was:

I believe that I am lucky to have experienced and to remember all of my ups and downs.

I did not used to believe this. When I was 14 and my alcoholic mother took her own life, I did not feel lucky. When I separated from my husband while my children were young and my siblings lived 3,000 miles away, I did not feel lucky. Sure, during happy times, it has been easy and obvious to feel fortunate. But when I have suffered loss, humiliation, failure, confusion, or depression, I have not felt lucky.

The other day, while teaching in a middle school classroom, I refamiliarized myself with Lois Lowry’s novel “The Giver.” In it, a futuristic dystopian community, save for one man, lives without memories of pre-community life, because those memories – of war, of love, of death – have been deemed too painful or powerful. While reading the part when the Giver, an old man, passes the memories, in all of their beauty and horror, to the little boy chosen to hold them next, I began to cry, and stopped to analyze my emotion. I realized that my tears were borne of an increasingly clear revelation: that my experiences and my memories of them, both the beautiful and the ugly, are the essence of my life, and without them I would be empty.

Thankfully, what hardship I have endured has been surmountable. And of course, I try to minimize suffering in my life and in those of others.

But there’s a feeling of heart-swell in response to both good and bad memories. My ability to feel sorrow and to reflect on it is precious, just as is my ability to feel and remember joy. Why do we watch and love movies such as “Terms of Endearment” or “Saving Private Ryan”? Because, though they make us cry, they address the struggles that define our existence. And emotion, whether it is in the form of joy or sadness, is another sense, beyond the usual five, that not only aids in survival, but also enriches and gives meaning to our experiences.

My father lived to be 91, and it was important to him to tell the most significant stories of his life, those laden with love, those brushing with death, those that would have been forbidden in “The Giver”: when he was tiny, his mother secretly saving the milk bottle’s cream just for him; after she died, his brother running away from the orphanage in which they were raised; as a teen, almost drowning while swimming in the Hudson; as a man, witnessing the ironic beauty in the flushed cheeks of his most-feverish tuberculosis patients. And he said during his last years that much of what kept him going was curiosity. I turn the pages of my own life with a bit of trepidation, but, yes, with curiosity, and, now, with the realization that I am lucky to experience, feel, and remember it all, my whole story, the good and the bad.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your response should be self-contained. When someone reads your responses, they should be able to tell which question you are responding to.  In marking the essay you should be clear in what idea and item you are reacting to. The markings should indicate a close and personal reading of the essay. Excessive markings or lack of markings may indicate a failure to have closely read and comprehended the essay. |  |
| Based on your reading and marking of the essay identify the main idea of the essay as well as support including direct quotations and evidence from the essay. Your response should be limited to no more than one (1) well written and adequately edited paragraph. |  |
| Using at least two (2) of the writing prompts below and in no more than three (3) well written and adequately edited paragraphs create a response to the essay:   * The part (s) of the essay I agreed with were * The part (s) of the essay I disagreed with were * This essay reminded me of/ made me think of * This essay made me think in a new way * This essay was similar to another essay |  |
| What question (s) would you like to ask the author of this essay? Explain your reasoning for wanting to have the answer to this question. |  |
| Having now read this essay I… |  |
| **Presenters Only:** You will need to have three (3) questions that you would like to present to your classmates during your seminar. |  |

The time I completed reading and marking this assignment was: