

Learning for Life by Joannie Paul

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I am a student in the St. Mary's First Nation Adult Learning Program. Here, I am learning a lot. I am having good experiences because I am learning new things. One of the biggest changes is that I am learning to love learning about everything. What I don't know, I will learn. If I don't know it, I will find it out and learn how to do it because it will bug me until I do.

Basically, I am a helper. I want to know how I can help others. I like working with people and have a very close connection to people who have challenges. I think this is so because I was faced with challenges when I was going to school. I like to learn by doing and working with my hands a lot.

I started work very young and only went to grade 8. I started living on my own when I was 16 years old. I take great pride in raising my family. I am a mother of two children (one son is finished school and the other is in school now). That's why I started back to school; to get my grade 12. My oldest son won a car for going to school every day from kindergarten to grade 12 without missing a day. My younger son is now in grade 9 and hasn't missed a day as yet. I am very proud of them for going every day. We all learn something everyday and there is always something new to learn wherever you go. I call that 'keeping an open mind'.

In public school, it was very hard to learn how to do the work. When I asked for help in school my teachers would just say 'one minute' then not help me at all and never come over. Now I am going to St. Mary's First Nation Adult Learning Program and learning different kinds of things. Today I look forward to going to school and learning. When you have someone there that will help you, it is better because people don't get angry with you when you can't do the work that you've never done before.

When I started school, as an adult I had a hard time doing the work because I had not been in a classroom for so long. There was some work that I had never done before, and there was new work that I had a hard time with. When I started writing Essays, I knew how to read and write well enough to get by. I learned everything the hard way; usually through the experience of life.

When I am done I would like to help people with special needs. I have taken my first step by starting school.

By Joannie Paul Teacher: Joanne Wilson, St Mary's Adult Learning Program, Fredericton, Central Valley Adult Learning Association