

Hopeless

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By Erika Gozar

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Please Note: Some of the names mentioned and any personal information given have been altered for privacy reasons.

Dear Reader,

Before you lies quite an adventure. Over the next hundred five pages, I unravel a tragic story of beginnings without closure, of endeavors without fruition, of striving without hope. In this piece, I write about a season in my life when I was drowning in despair, wishing to finish a work once begun, and never able to grasp the end. In the summer of 2013, I started work on an outreach music video. Various obstacles impeded me on my quest and, after three years of trial and failure, left my spirit dead, suffocated by the loss of hope. After three years of forgetting, trying, and failing, I resigned myself to a disposition of hopelessness. I leave you to this journey on your own. *Hopefully*, if this attempt be successful, you will then look upon life as through the eyes of a dead man.

Enjoy!

Erika Gozar

(Excerpted from *BASIS Charter Schools Parent Student Handbook 2016-2017*, page 38, under “Course Promotion, Failure to Achieve Grade Promotion and Available Resolutions.”)

- **Successfully Passing Courses in Grades 9–12:** Students must pass each of their courses with a grade of >60% in order to be eligible for promotion. Students who fail courses are required to make up the credit. This may be achieved by either successfully completing an equivalent course outside of the School, while following the rules identified in Transfer Credit or concurrent enrollment, or retaking the course in a subsequent school year. This option is limited by the School’s schedule and may not be available until 12th grade.

From Erika Gozar, Grade 10, October 12, 2015

This letter was written directed to Mrs. Barker, but it is addressed to Mrs. Dunn and Ms. Shubert as well:

I am completely able to do your assignment, but I have been unable to bring myself to work on it because I cannot bring myself to *want* to do it. I have been hopelessly restless because of the thing that I wanted to do for many months but am not able to do, so much that I cannot bring myself to want to do my homework. Anything that requires thinking I cannot do because I need to be motivated to think about it, and I CANNOT motivate myself to do it. I have felt like my wish had been failing, subtly over twelve months, scarcely over two, strongly over four more months, and now my hope is gone. Every day I sit at my desk, or wherever I do my work, and stare at the paper, sometimes in indecision about which homework to start, sometimes with an empty gaze of a clouded mind, sometimes with a wish to just pray.

Sometimes over this week, I went downstairs where my brother and sister were talking and talked with them, hanging out a little, having fun. Then, I felt like I could *do things*, so I

went back upstairs, stood for a moment in indecision, chose to work, and wrote not a single word on the page for the rest of my sitting. Sometimes, I tried to exercise to help me to focus. Often, I played music in the background to keep my head awake. Seldom did I write anything. For a few scattered moments over the break, I did manage to write *something* down – a clueless sentence in a bewildered attempt at my assignment.

However, this past Sunday, I was able to write something that was on my heart. Here it is:

Love – The Foundation of Our Faith

Erika Gozar

October 11, 2015

Love is the foundation of the faith – without it, the house would topple. How can I stand if I have nothing to stand on? We can't pursue the meat without drinking the milk. If we leave the milk, and abandon it entirely, and just eat the meat, we'd get sick of the meat, and throw it up. We would get deprived of the milk, and throw up the meat, because we had enough of it. We need to still drink the milk while we eat the meat. We need a constant input of milk. If we pursue other "higher matters" of the faith, but leave or forget the milk, we get dry and shallow in the faith. We need a refreshing drink of a sweet, soothing, silky gallon of warm milk. We're so deprived of the milk, we need something. We're not hungry; we're *starving thirsty!*

God's love is the foundation of our faith. We need always to have that constant reminder of God's love, and build our knowledge of the faith off of that. We must always remember God's love, and love him for it – how He died *for us*; to set us

free, to save us! What greater love is there than that? We love him for it, and honor Him in everything we do, because He loves us.

Because Yeshua died for us, and bought us with His blood, we belong to him; by His blood all our sins are washed away, and we are made new, and clean – *righteous*. If we believe that Yeshua died for us, we accept that gift. If we don't believe, we don't receive, and we also continue going our own sinful way. Through Him, through the power of His Spirit, we are free from the bondages of the devil, and are free to live for Him. We have been bought with His blood, and Satan has no right to have any hold on us; we are God's, and we have been made clean by His blood. Now we live as His own, since we belong to Him, serving Him alone, and not ourselves, and not our wicked desires.

However, our relationship with God – our life living for God – is not only to be free from all things evil and to cast all wickedness away from us. If that were to be our standard, our goal, when the tribulation – the purifying fire – comes to test us, we cannot stand. If our goal is only to keep ourselves clean

and righteous before God, the pressure would become too hard for us, and we would give in. The goal I have – the reason I press on – is to grasp the gift God has for me: to receive a life forever with Him, in His presence, in Heaven. That’s why I press on. Nothing can compare to that! Nothing can compare to His sweet Presence. That is the upward calling Paul talks about: to enter into an eternal life in the Presence of the LORD—to live with Him forever. There is nothing worth more than to dwell in His Presence. Better is one day in the house of the LORD than a thousand elsewhere. That is the reason I live, the reason I continue to stand firm—because I want to be with Him, forever. What a marvelous gift that is! No wonder Sukkot is such a marvelous feast, and no wonder Shabbat is the most important feast of them all – because then we will live with the LORD *forever!*

When God created Adam and Eve, he created them blameless, without knowledge of sin. His intention was to dwell in unity with his people, whom He created. Since the fall, man has had the capability to sin and had always fallen prey to it. We could not dwell with the LORD, because we were not

pure. The LORD cannot stand wickedness in His Presence. When Yeshua died for us as the atoning sacrifice for our sins, the Pesach, he made a way for us to live with Him. His first coming, the wonderful story of the Pesach and the spring feasts, was carried out so that God's purpose can be achieved during His second coming, the fall feasts and Sukkot, when we will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air, and to be with Him forever. That is the big picture! That's the reason we continue in our faith—to be with Him forever!

So, we must encourage one another, so that we all can press on, and attain the promise of Salvation – to have our own bodies changed, purified from all uncleanness, and to enter into the Presence of the LORD in His Holy house—so that even through the fire, the furnace of the Tribulation, we shall still hold on to God's promise and attain Salvation – His gift to all who endure to the end, through Yeshua Messiah. Amen.

I can write a good essay; I have the skills to do it. I can write anything my heart is on; I just need my heart to be on it. My heart is always on my God. I have not been able to finish the thing He sent me to do seven months ago – the outreach music video I had been composing inconsistently since the summer of 2013. This failure has officially gotten to me. All this time I've been in despair, believing for over a year that I could not finish what I started two and a half years ago. If I be allowed, I would do it; but “my homework needs to be done, first.” It's an endless cycle of failing, losing hope, failing more, losing more hope—and I don't know when it will end.

“Bible Flashback First Takes”



These are the first takes of a shot I planned to put in my music video. They were taken on Saturday, October 5, 2013 after church service.

*Please go to <http://bit.ly/BibleFlashbackFirstTakes> to view the video.

Please don't fail me. I don't want to leave BASIS. I *LOVE* BASIS. This is the school God has blessed me with since the year it was founded. I have never known a school like BASIS—the teachers are colloquial, the students are kindhearted, the courses are college-level, and it's only eight minutes away from me. This is my home. Please give me another chance. I would be ashamed if I don't move on to eleventh grade, and I would not see the light of hope if I take the summer class.

Erika Gozar 8th Grade

February 11, 2014 English

Rhetorical Writing Assignment — 25 points

Propaganda Slogan – 15 points

Today, friends, I am addressing a matter upon which, I believe, we all must reflect. Each night, for the past six months, we have gone home from school and exerted a tremendous amount of effort into our homework—effort to get all that homework done very *quickly*. Just think about it: How much homework are we assigned every week? How much time are we given to finish it? All of the effort put into our homework was inevitably directed into hastily completing our homework, and no time leniency was given for any of that effort to be used towards getting it done *well*. How could any of us have even tried to put any effort into the quality of our work, if we had no

time left over to even give ourselves a break before we went to bed? We need more than just two days off from school. If there will be time, when will it come?

With time, we can have a rejuvenating rest from this intense labor. Then, our satisfied minds will be able to exert full force in our studies, without being hindered by the thought of, “Will I ever have some time of my own?” constantly nagging at our brains. Is it not scientifically supported, friends, that periodically giving the brain a rest to replenish its strength increases a student’s performance capability? What, then, would an overworked brain contribute to the benefit of a student’s performance ability?

Look around the room. What do you see? . . . I see a room of individuals filled with potential. No student makes it into BASIS without potential. Each student has unique abilities that

are waiting to be set free from confinement—to be free to flourish and produce in creativity. What is gained if these special abilities are not put to use? Who would be given a gift, and not use it? What have *you* been doing with your abilities? Have you been putting your skills to use? Each of us has a purpose. Why should we be withheld from fulfilling it? Why should we be hindered by the withholding of time?

With time, we shall thrive. With time, we shall rest. With time, we shall flourish. Give us a four-day school week, instead of five. There will be time, and that time comes today!

Thursday, August 14, 2014

Dear Erika Gozar:

Congratulations! Based on your cumulative GPA, you have been invited to apply for membership in the BASIS Peoria chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. Membership in the NJHS is the highest honor given to a junior high student and carries with it a distinction recognized nation-wide. We encourage you to apply for this exceptional opportunity. As you complete your application, please keep in mind the following requirements must be met:

- You must have a cumulative grade point average of at least a **3.50** for the Upper School and a **90.0** for Lower School following the third quarter marking period
- You must complete the NJHS application including the required essay and obtain the required signatures.
- You must be an active member in at least **two** extracurricular activities. One of the two may be from participation in a recent outside organization (with a qualifying signature on the application).
- A minimum of **one** activity must be from BASIS Peoria during the current school year.

- Students must exemplify good citizenship and character. You must have a clean discipline record.
- Students are expected to be outstanding in the area of scholarship, service, character, leadership, and citizenship throughout the school year. All five areas are of equal importance in determining membership.
- Once accepted, members will be expected to maintain the qualification standards including a grade point average of at least **3.25** for the Upper School and **87.0** for Lower School. Students will also be expected to complete **30** hours of community service throughout the school year (**20** hours in/for the BASIS Peoria school building and **10** hours in the community).

Throughout the next school year, NJHS will meet monthly and participate in various service opportunities. If eligible, students will be expected to serve as peer tutors with a one hour per week peer tutoring requirement. Peer tutoring hours will count towards the service requirement within the building. Your membership experience in NJHS will create unique opportunities for service, leadership, and character that you will carry with you throughout the rest of your life. Please submit the completed application to Ms. Fieldman, in Room 7, by 4:00 p.m. on **Friday, August 22nd**. **We will not accept late applications.** Your application and essay will be reviewed by the NJHS Faculty Council that consists of five teachers. You will be informed of your acceptance into NJHS by the end of the school day on **Tuesday, August 26th**. If you have any

further questions, please send an email to Ms. Fieldman at ms.fieldman@basispeoria.org.

Respectfully,

Justin Webber
Head of School, BASIS Peoria

Ms. Fieldman
NJHS Sponsor, BASIS Peoria

Stephanie Brioux
NJHS President, BASIS Peoria

Two summers ago, I made an awful mistake in filling my hours with scheduled activities, multiple activities, to try to finish projects I had previously begun. By the start of school, I had not accomplished the one task I wanted to do most. For the bulk of last year, I had not been able to rest one single day from my homework. Still suffering from the same strict early-morning, late-night schedule I had made for the previous summer, I continued for a while with horrible sleep and work patterns. After a while, I finally threw that away, and tried to pursue my goals. My mind was always attacked with the thought of my ongoing failure, but I never let that secret out. Last summer, I *again* made *another* schedule to try to finish that music video, while still completing other projects. With my mind still in the mud (which was now a mixture of my failure, a couple additional pressures, and pond water), I was barely able to accomplish anything. When the second month of my summer approached, I finally pushed that schedule aside, my mind crowded with confusion and uncertainty, and spent my days trying to pray to clearly see the path before me and the swamp behind.

Time	Activity
6:00-7:00	Wake Up, Breakfast
7:05-7:15	Brush Teeth, Facial Cream
7:20-7:40	Read Bible
7:45-7:55	Pray
8:00-8:30	Study Hebrew
8:35-8:50	Watch <i>The Fuel Project</i>
8:55-9:20	Watch David Pawson
9:25-10:23	Memorize Bible
10:28-11:00	Practice Piano
11:05-11:40	Work on Chronological Gospels
11:45-12:45	Lunch, Brush Teeth
12:50-1:20	Practice Guitar
1:25-2:13	Work on “Your Love”
2:18-2:50	Watch <i>Escaping the Powers of Darkness and Witchcraft</i>
2:55-3:30	Read <i>Ignite Your Fire</i>
3:35-4:20	Practice Voice
4:25-4:55	Shower

Time	Activity
5:00-6:00	Dinner, Brush Teeth
6:05-6:55	Guitar Lessons/Vocal Lessons/Watch John Paul Jackson
7:00-7:20	Evening Meal
7:25-7:45	Read <i>The Principle of Authority</i>
7:50-8:25	Practice Calligraphy
8:30-9:15	Recite Bible
9:20-9:30	Brush Teeth, Floss
9:35-9:55	Pray
10:00	Sleep

Internal Monologue:

“I forgot!” I forgot the music video. I waited the whole year so I could finish the music video, and I didn’t do it. I didn’t do anything. I *wasted* my summer. I shouldn’t have made that schedule! I tried to finish “Your Love” and all those other things, and I didn’t work on the music video. I waited a year to finish the music video, and now I’ll have to wait one more year to continue it. Now my chance is gone. Now I’m caught under ten more months of hardship. I won’t have time for the music video. I won’t be able to finish the music video . . .

I didn’t finish the music video.

(It is 11:30 p.m. Erika is sitting at her desk with a blank Pages document open on her computer screen. She stares at the computer. The mother is sitting downstage right of Erika, on a chair temporarily placed beside her. She has a Visaya accent.)

Mother: *(She looks at Erika and sees that she's not typing.)*
Why aren't you typing? *(Erika looks down. Mother waits for an answer.)* Type now. *(She waits, but Erika doesn't move)*
(More aggressively) Type now. *(Erika starts typing.)* Good.
(Erika continues typing. Mother watches the screen to see what Erika is writing.) [Beat] Finish one page tonight, then brush your teeth and go to bed. *(She stands up and heads toward the door downstage right.)*

Erika: When can I do the music video?

Mother: *(Stops.)* Don't think about the music video. *Forget* the music video. Focus your mind on your homework. As a student, you are held accountable for your homework. *After* you finish your homework, *then* you are free to do whatever you want!

Erika: I *never* finish my homework!

Mother: *So? Then you can't do the music video!*

Erika: *What?! (She is almost about to cry.)*

Mother: *See? Oauwh! So, if you want to work on your music video, you need to focus your mind on your school.*

(Erika starts crying. Mother walks to the door again and stops.) I'll be back to check on you before I go to bed. (She exits through the door downstage right.)

(Erika continues crying audibly. After a few seconds, she looks up.)

Erika: *(Praying; suicidally) Let me forget the music video! (She looks down again and continues sobbing.)*

That was merely the beginning . . .

Thank you for reading the sample of *Hopeless*. If you enjoyed this sample and would like to read more, visit

AServantsJourneyBooks.weebly.com/Hopeless.html to order a copy.

This book is part of a book series called *A Servant's Journey*. If you would like to see how the whole story unfolds, scroll down and subscribe at AServantsJourneyBooks.weebly.com to be notified when new books are released!