

## The Importance of Dance in My Life

Lucy McNulty

Dance is an important part of my life because I have the ability to do it. I love to dance. It has been a big part of my life since I was four. Dance has always been a big part of my life. When I quit all other sports, people used to ask me “Why don’t you do a real sport”, and I always said “I am doing a real sport and in dance, there are no rivals, just a place to express myself.” I have been depressed and anxious for a long time and something that always helped me feel better was expressing my feelings on the dance floor. I have always loved to dance, but my passion became so much stronger because a point came in my life where I couldn’t bare to dance. Last year, I experienced some of the worst pain I have eve been in. Though it slowed me down from reaching my full dance potential, I overcame that. Dance has become a bigger part of my life since then.

Last year, I was in extreme pain whenever I would dance because my hip was in so much pain. I danced through the pain to the best of my ability, but the pain would often become overwhelming and unbearable. I would go to school and be thankful I only had two classes on the third floor because it hurt to climb the stairs. I would come home and do my homework despite the raging firey pain. I’d go to dance some days and be in even more pain within fifteen minutes into class. By the time class was over, I would be a ten on the pain scale. I would stay to stretch and everything, but I still went home unable to sleep because I was in so much pain. It took many long and painful months to figure out what was going on. My physical therapist hypothesized that my hip flexor had some sort of tear. I did months of ultrasounds, exercises, stim and ice or sometimes heat, and I would be taped up and sent on my way. She always said “Slow down on the dance.” I never once compiled. I danced and did yoga like this. Once I was doing downward dog and, someone said “cool tape.” From that day forward, I embraced my tape because it helped me feel better and actually make it through dance without the urge to cry.

Sometimes being unable to dance because I was in pain made me realize how important dance is to my life. I spend countless hours doing exercises and ice so that I can do everything I love without pain, especially dancing. I was sad when I couldn’t dance because my hip was all that was on my mind and it took the enjoyment out of the thing that I loved the most, dance. I still get flare-ups of pain, but it’s much nicer to be able to dance without being in pain the whole time. I realized that this pain held me back. I got the pain under control and embarked on a brand new journey. I asked Karyn if I could take lyrical even though I didn’t meet the standards. Luckily she said yes.

I am incredibly grateful for her because without her yes, I would have never unlocked a new door. Lyrical has become my favorite class. Before I started lyrical, I was afraid of stepping out of my comfort zone because of my pain. Morgan taught me that bigger is more powerful, and I took a leap of faith and tried it out. Because of this, improv isn’t awkward, I can dance bigger, and I have the most confidence I have had in myself for the entire sixteen years of my life. I finally have found the ability to dance ten times bigger than the room and not be scared of hurting. I no longer care if I hurt after dance because I know I did my absolute best.

I am so glad I have the All That Dance community in my life. If it weren’t for my teacher understanding what was going on with me, I would not be where I am. I probably wouldn’t have advanced and even be writing this essay. If not for Karyn, I would not have found a new style that I love so much. Even my friends at All That Dance have supported everything I ever did. From switching from Jazz to Modern, adding Ballet, and taking a leap of faith in Lyrical. My sister, however, is one of my biggest influencers. I watched Hanna take countless classes, spend all of her spare time at the studios, doing company. I saw her do company and became extraordinarily fascinated. From that moment I saw it, I knew that I had to do it eventually. I am incredibly grateful of my ATD family.

Dance has the value in life to change everything. For me, it changed the way I see myself and how I dance. I overcame some of the worst pain I've ever experienced, and now, I dance better than I ever have danced before. I know that my family, friends, and dance community are proud of me for coming to learn to overcome obstacles, but I'm proud of myself in a different way. I unlocked a part of myself that allows myself to achieve new things in dance. I worked hard to unlock this part and I refuse to let that part be dormant. I hope to continue to dance for as long as I can. I will be forever grateful for All That Dance for helping me discover a passion.

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