

Student #9

Not all of us are lucky in this life, but some of us that are unlucky can overcome the difficulties and shine the light for others. Kasey Render, a former UCF student, who many years ago took ENC with professor Nelson, came to tell the story of his life. Kasey had to face things that many people do not have the courage to overcome. From the very young age he was exposed to multitude of problems. By the time he was in college, he had to worry about his mother, who was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's, his demented grandmother and his two uncles – first being a crack addict and the second facing time for the crime he didn't commit.

At the same time Kasey was trying to navigate his personal life. If this story was being told in a film, the main character, Kasey, would have found a miraculous way out. But this was real life.

Under much pressure, Kasey became depressed, his personal life broke down. After his girlfriend left him, he became suicidal. In what he thought would be his last call, he told his ex-girlfriend that he had intentions to end his life. Luckily, his ex-girlfriend called his mom, who notified the police. Several hours later Kasey was admitted to the mental ward. This was the beginning of Kasey's story.

It shook me how Kasey wasn't afraid to open up to us and talk about the personal details of his life as if we were his longtime friends. I know that takes courage and confidence. To be able to expose your most vulnerable parts means not to be afraid to take a hit at what hurts the most.

Throughout his speech, Kasey talked about the therapeutic effect of writing. I can't tell for sure how much the writing was responsible for helping him manage his problems, but I know that the introspective part of it must have done a lot. Having to overcome so much does make Kasey credible to give mental health advice.

Currently, Kasey is working on a startup that aims to bring mental coaching online. The website with his startup is full of his personal stories and blogs that show him overcoming his life difficulties. I think that it would be beneficial for the startup if Kasey got in touch with mental health professionals so they can add a more academic approach to the problems he is trying to help people overcome.

I loved Kasey's speech so much I stayed after class to personally thank him and share some of the experiences I had in life. It was great to listen to him, and I wish there were more people like him.