



YOUTUBE LETTERS: STANDING MAN

Hello Friends,

The days of writing the dissertation were nearly all dark. The alarm would go off early in the morning, about four. My brain works best when the world is asleep, and the demands of the day have yet to pile on. What time of day do you write best? It is a question that is vital to graduate school success.

A shower to wake up, brief breakfast, and then slide out the front door to drive to the coffee shop in town that opened the earliest. If I stayed home to write (or study), either the isolation would be overwhelming, or I would fall back asleep in a chair. Both of which would illicit a cycle of regret over lost time or emotions. I study best with white noise, how about you?

Once at the coffee shop, I would arrive as their first customer about one minute after opening. I would greet the barista(s) by name. I have from the day I started the PhD, through the dissertation, and now as I write the book. Names are important. Very important. They are vital to graduate school success. Do you know the name of your barista, janitor at work, grocer, or other person in your world who serves you daily? Their kind service extends your ability to function in healthy ways in these trying times...to write, to read, to "Harvard" your articles, to critique. Tanner is the name of the barista at the coffee shop I presently frequent each morning.

With beverage in hand, I would make my way over to the corner of the store where the long table and two windows converged. It is a public spot. People can see my screen and know whether I truly am studying or tempted with distractions (email, chat, video games, etc.) At the time mine was an iced Starbucks double shot with cinnamon dolce while now it is an iced Americano with cream/sugar. Most people have a favorite coffee drink or beverage of some type...I've learned it's a good question to ask in casual social circles.

With laptop set up and noise cancelling headphones on, I would open up NVivo software, or R Studio for data analysis...later it shifted to just writing. Sometimes I hid behind the data analysis because I was scared of writing. What do you hide behind when you have to write? It is a question that is vital to graduate school success.

But before I could begin anything, I had two tasks. The first was to text a live picture of an open laptop to my writing partner showing proof I had gotten out of bed and arrived to do the work. When you spend hours and hours working alone, it is important that you have touch points where your life intentionally intersects with others. The second task, which is what I am leaving you with, is a video clip. I literally watched it....everyday until I finished the dissertation. I hope you resonate with some part of it as you begin your day today:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRSIPvuYwOY>

Standing with you,

Joshua Travis Brown, Ph.D.