

If there is one word I could use to define the first 8 months of 2010 it would definitely have to be “struggle”. In every aspect of that word I’ve struggled...I’ve struggled with life...I’ve struggled with love...I’ve struggled with friends...I’ve struggled with family...I’ve struggled with the fact that I didn’t put on a uniform everyday...I’ve struggled with just wanting to end it all...I lost a best friend...I mended a broken heart only to have it shattered again...I’ve experimented with mind altering substances...I’ve hit the bottle hard...I’ve struggled with finding my identity...I’ve struggled finding my substance. It was absolute misery in every sense of the word.

That all ended by taking a trip to the one and only place where I never intended on returning from...the Niagara gorge.

During my descent; I wrote down all the struggles that had been decaying my mental and physical well being. When I could go no further, I stopped...cracked a cold one...said ‘ello love to “The Caucasian” and positioned myself on the foundation of what is now “my substance”. I stood a mere few inches from the raging waters of the mighty gorge with my iPod screaming in my ears...my journal in one hand and my hope in the other. I left all my pain, misery, heart ache and confusion in the form of tears and screams of agony at that very location; a place that I still frequent and unconditionally love. My pleas were so easily consumed by her raging waters and the wind gusts she produced seemed to cut right through me...it was enlivening. I did this for about an hour; just letting it all out...all alone...with no one to judge me. I literally collapsed from the exhaustion and when I felt I had no more to give I rested. I really don’t know how long I napped for but when my eyes opened, I witnessed a red-tailed hawk perched upon my daypack that my journal rested upon. I watched for what seemed like an eternity as the wind violently flipped the pages back and forth...it seemed like she was patiently reading in content; only to confirm what I had said to be true that hot august afternoon. When I sat up; to my amazement the hawk glared at me and shrieked twice...then gently jumped and let the winds carry her away. It was a very moving moment for me for and I had never experienced anything like that before in my life. I felt inspired and began to frantically write down all the thoughts in my head about my surroundings and how they reminded me of love & life. It’s so difficult to describe what the gorge means to me...she is my unconditional love...she embraces me...she accepts me for all my flaws...she listens to me...she is beautiful...she is glorious...but most importantly; she liberated me.

After that day my outlook on life has changed tremendously. I realized that I was doing the things I “liked” vice doing the things I “wanted” and totally forgot about me. So, I made myself my priority in my own life and it’s something I should’ve started doing a long time ago. Since my experience, I have enrolled in school, landed my dream job and have reconnected as well as come across new friends that have played a significant role in my life the last 4 months. I’ve lapsed to what makes me content; my photography, my poetry, my art, my music, my running and mother nature. I’m determined to not look back at the things/people that have hurt me or that have dragged me down. Now I merely look at them as obstacles that have molded me into the man I am in this present day. It kind of puts things into perspective when you realize that your life is only inches away and you dig down deep inside you to find the courage to carry on. In reality everything is a blessing in disguise.

Time heals everything...so I learned to be patient

I never gave up; no matter how bad I wanted to quit...so I learned resilience

I had to be strong for myself...I found my strength

Good bye 2010...we shared some glorious times!