**Emails from Former Students**

**on Finding Themselves in Class**

Former student, 4/2019

Hi Mr Creger!

It’s been a while! As my first year at college comes to a close, I was reminded about my creed project from sophomore year. I’ve been reading through all my materials again and I just wanted to say thank you for forcing me to be a little more introspective. Writing down my values definitely made them more concrete and gave me the ability to discern influences in my daily life.

I know it’s been over two years, but if you still had a video copy of my presentation I would really appreciate seeing it again. I can’t believe how much my perspective has evolved in what feels like such a short time. I also can’t believe how many of my core values have stayed the same.

I just wanted to write this email to let you know how much I appreciate having done this project and how much I enjoyed your class. I reread all my old essays recently as well—I can’t remember ever enjoying any assignment as much as I enjoyed writing those essays. Your class was a huge influence both for my writing style and for my personal philosophy, and I just wanted to say thank you.

Your old student,
Nisha G.

c/o 2017

Former student of colleague, 6/2018

Hello Mr. Creger,

My name is Julius and I am a 2014 alumnus of American High School. I made a personal creed project in Justin Demartini’s class during my sophomore year and remember the assignment as fun and enlightening. Your approach to teaching students wisdom resonated with me so much the first time, I would very much like to complete the project again this summer.

I saw your publication online and noticed that it can be purchased from Amazon or Heinemann but I honestly don’t have the money to buy it. I’m wondering if you can share the instructions you give to your students during class or the instructions you share with other teachers. If that is not possible, I understand.

I’m reaching out to you today because I’m at a point in my college career where I feel lost and need clarity. I feel like your project can provide the framework I need to redetermine my purpose and direction. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time.

Regards,

Julius C.

c/o 2014

Former student now a junior sheltering in place, 4/8/2020

Hi Mr. Creger,

I was wondering if your sophomores ever got the chance to watch Creed Presentations from your past students and if you are still doing the project with them. With the cancellation of school, I've been reflecting a lot on high school, and the Creed project has always stood out to me as incredibly impactful. If possible, I think it would be an amazing idea to ask some of your past students to livestream their Creed presentations in a Zoom class that your students attend. I would be more than happy to help you coordinate it and contact past students. With all the things that are getting cancelled, I think the Creed project is definitely still doable via online videos. With so much negativity and isolation right now, I think it would actually be a perfect opportunity to continue the Creed project since there is so much time for self reflection right now. Let me know what you think.

Bella J.

c/o 2021

Former student now graduating senior sheltering in place, 4/9/2020

Dear Mr. Creger,

Your classroom gave me so much more confidence in my own writing abilities and having the opportunity to explore topics I myself found interesting was something I never really got a chance to do in a school environment. I feel so lucky to have had a teacher who allowed his students to not only explore and analyze things they deeply care about, but also have a project centered around who the student is. You promoted self-discovery, and honestly, that is one of the most valuable lessons, not one you would expect to find in a school.

Naomi S.

c/o 2020

Former student eight years later about to enter Navy Seals, 10/2012

Hi Mr. Creger,

I have 11 weeks before I start my six year contract with the Navy and I thought it would be a perfect time to reevaluate everything that's gone on in my life (Entering a program where only one in five men graduate and failure means scrubbing the deck of some ship as an e-3 undesignated seaman with a college degree. At the same time, not having time to be there for my mom because I'll be in training). I was wondering if you could send me the assignments whenever you have time. I regret not doing the Creed project properly the first time around. I'll admit I had Alex K. help more than I should have. Maybe it was for the better because I'm still thinking about it today.

Benjamin G.

c/o 2006

Former student eight years later, 1/2016

Hello Mr. Creger! ‬

       It's been awhile but I was in your sophomore year English class in 2007. I've always been meaning to tell you how much I appreciated your class because of the inner work you allowed us to do. Nothing is more valuable in my mind than journeying within oneself. I've kept almost all my assignments from your class as I refer back to them and reflect on how I've changed and learned since then. Many teachers have taught me things but the I've only had a few that taught me the importance of being in tune with spirit. I remember meditating in your class, reading poems with Sufi elements, and the creed project which truly allowed for inner reflection. Now I'm still on the path to discovering new things but have really come to see how interconnected everything is. Sufism and its teaching is something I've really come to love and go to for reflection. I just wanted to say thanks for all that you do and continue to do! Especially with so much technology nowadays, people can become so disconnected from themselves and from spirit. I hope to make a difference the way you have as I continue on my journey to also become a teacher. ‬‬

Thank you! ‬

Fatima A.

c/o 2010‬

Former student writing about the Creed experience in a medical school essay, 7/2017

Hi Mr. Creger,

Hope you're doing well. I just wanted to let you know that I'm going to write about my creed in one of my medical school essays.



It's a secondary application for Georgetown's medical school. The prompt was to describe why you wanted to apply to Georgetown and how will georgetown's education help you be a better doctor. I'm writing a narrative about how I got interested in medicine. And when I did the creed, I remember deciding that I wanted to be a doctor that focused on mental health as well as the physical. The creed was the first point in my life where I truly hammered out my ideology towards medicine (which is similar to georgetown's approach to care)

Haarika

c/o 2014

Former student requesting instructions to revisit Creed project, sheltering in place 5/2020

I didn't pass the bar exam and was initially pretty bummed and disappointed-- I plan on retaking it but have been avoiding the world since. The bar exam is more of a psychological exam than it is substantive-- so writing step 1 one of the creed was so helpful in getting me motivated again because it reminded me of who I am. Law school and law as a career (since I'm working for a law firm) really takes that skill away from you.

 I actually struggled with the Big Questions for a while-- something that I had no problem with when I was 16-- I was full of Big Questions back then. In fact, my #1 Big Question is about that exactly: How do we become so entangled with our goals that we forget who we are-- we lose sight of the bigger picture and the bigger questions? The creed reminded me of not just who I am but why I went to law school in the first place and that is why I have to get back on the horse and try again! Failure can be so much more enlightening sometimes and also has showed me some of my friend's and family's true colors.

Harneel L.

c/o 2007

Former student now junior requesting instructions to re-do project, 2/18

Hello Mr. Creger!

Could you please send me a copy of the Creed project instructions, as well as the abridged version you mentioned? I look forward to doing this project again!

Have a wonderful day!

Your former student,

Shreya N.

c/o 2019

Former student six years later, 10/2013

Mr. Creger,

I was in your sophomore and junior backgrounds and English class in 2005-2006 and I am writing this email today to say thank you! You are still the most inspiring teacher I have ever had, and the personal creed project you developed has helped me find soul in purpose in learning. The creed project I had done in 2005 has had a major impact in my life. After I had graduated I was feeling lost and took a few years off before going back to college. I took the time off because I was sure what I wanted to do with my life. During my time off, I came across my old creed project and the first question we had to ask was, "what is wisdom?" And "what is courage?" I can admit my answers were pretty mediocre, "courage is, being brave." I decided to buy your book and do my personal creed in my twenties and see how I have changed, and I have. I took the time to think about the question what is courage? And my answer now is, Courage is doing the right thing when the wrong thing seems to produce better results. Courage is looking past your personal goals and dedicating your life for the betterment of mankind. Courage is doing what you were born for, against the odds. Courage is leaving behind those things you value with the hopes that they will return to you. Courage is taking the first step. Courage is standing up for your future when your past keeps knocking you down. Courage is one more day. I wanted to thank you Mr. Creger for continuing to teach me after all these years and to inspire me to be who I want to be and to work hard for what I want. I have received my AA In Sociology, BA In sociology and now I am finishing my MS in clinical child psychology and family marriage therapy credential. I am working as a behavioral therapist, and I have been trained and certified has a domestic violence counselor and advocate for adults, children, and teens in abusive relationships. After taking off years of school after high school I have found my purpose I learning and I have found my soul. I know now that I was put here on this planet to help others in good times and bad. I like the to call the work that I do "heart work" because to takes a lot of heart and courage to be there for someone in need. So, thank you Mr. Creger for helping me find my way.

Sincerely,

Kelly K.

c/o 2007

From current student, 4/2018

Hi Mr. Creger,

I would like to reach to you about things regarding the Creed. What we’ve seen about the past Creed presenter (or in our case, one presenter) basically confirms what I said about the Creed on Monday regarding my concerns (telling the truth). Bad things are bound to happen at my age, whether it’s an exposure to injustice, personal issues, family issues, etc. and there’s no denying that as we’ve all been there. It is this very thing that managed to hold me back from doing the Creed early; I thought this project was like any other project, where you just simply breeze through it with no meaning put into it and getting the requirements down for an “A”. This Creed is far from that, >>>

continued:

being quite deep actually, and the more I think about the project the more I think about actually telling the truth rather than fabricating a fairytale because that is NOT what the Creed is (fake stories and low effort for a quick “A”). However, I’m not just there yet, telling the truth all that stuff and I still feel uneasy knowing that I have to tell the truth about my life. Thus I do not intend to work on the Creed alone in the shadows and would rather like to have some advice about the Creed to help me drive through that blockade.

1. What are your personal tips when getting yourself to present your own personal issues? As said before, this is a big issue of mine regarding the Creed (having to tell the truth) and being a teenager, I’ve personally gone through many things, some bad things in the mix too and I feel scared having to reveal my conflicts. However you’ve had to reveal your conflicts too yet have managed to do so bravely and ultimately putting your genuine trust to the people around you to hear your issues, it helps makes you a stronger person being able to get through the boundary. How do you do that?

2. Am I permitted to include my Personal Iceberg into the ‘Creed Values’ section of my presentation? I know it is a little bit impractical considering it shys away from the requirements and besides I do have a separate worksheet of the Iceberg after all! However I feel it to be more convenient for me; I do not have to scatter my Creed values over multiple slides rather just one slide and that I will also be able to show the information well via a second presentation website which will make the presentation more interesting and visually pleasing on top of things.

With that being said, thank you for creating this Creed; it’s defintely an addition that has drifted itself away from the ‘mundane and robotic’ school curriculum but for the better and I feel this Creed will help me and others enter a path that will hopefully get us to vanquish our inner demons. I commend you for that. It is alright if you don’t reply in “lightning speed” and instead do take your time. I will need all the help I can get to ensure that my Creed becomes an enlightening true story rather than a made up fable.

Tim P.

c/o 2020