High School English

May 14, 2009 By Shawn Decker

Just had the privilege of speaking to a class of high school English students. It was more about being published and writing than having HIV, though I did go into a lot of the biographical background. (Hey, I did write a memoir.)

I shared a funny story about the time when I was assigned to do a book report in junior high school. The thought of reading an entire book was overwhelming, so my back-up plan was to find a random book, look at the chapter titles, and then write what I thought happened based on those titles. So, I wrote out my fake story... and it was fun. I actually felt invested in the characters, and got a good grade. I vaguely remember my 8th grade English teacher telling me how interesting the book sounded- which likely sent me to the library to hide the actual book, which bore no resemblance to my story.

At the end of the class, I offered the chance of a free book to the students, none of whom are on MySpace anymore. I knew the site was dead a while back, then the proof started coming in emails. "Hey- see what your friends are doing on MySpace!" It's the same thing Friendster started to do when they began to spiral in their throes of death.

Anyway, I also offered a Synthetic Division CD giveaway. Well, the teacher said, "Let them hear it!" Thankfully, a couple of students were Tori Amos fans, so I had a couple of people on my side before the first note of our "Raspberry Swirl" cover hit...

It was kind of cool- sharing all the personal information about testing positive, dating, being diagnosed with AIDS right after falling in love... and I'm mortified when my music starts playing. *That's* what I'm most afraid of being rejected for! After 30 seconds of two songs, I realized I needed my keyboard player, Marshall (who graciously made a grocery run for Gwenn and I at 2 am on Tuesday night) and the neon sign to feel comfortable.

All in all, a fun day. I'm a lucky dude, and I'm glad that through speaking I can not only educate others, but constantly be reminded of all of the incredible things I have in my little positoid life.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

PS... I am all better from the bug. Gwenn is still tired, but getting better. Dave Gahan of Depeche Mode is still ailing, the band has had to cancel numerous shows... tell me: how do *I* handle the viral infection the best of the three of us?

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