



PERSEVERANCE

Telling My Story...



By Tim Baker

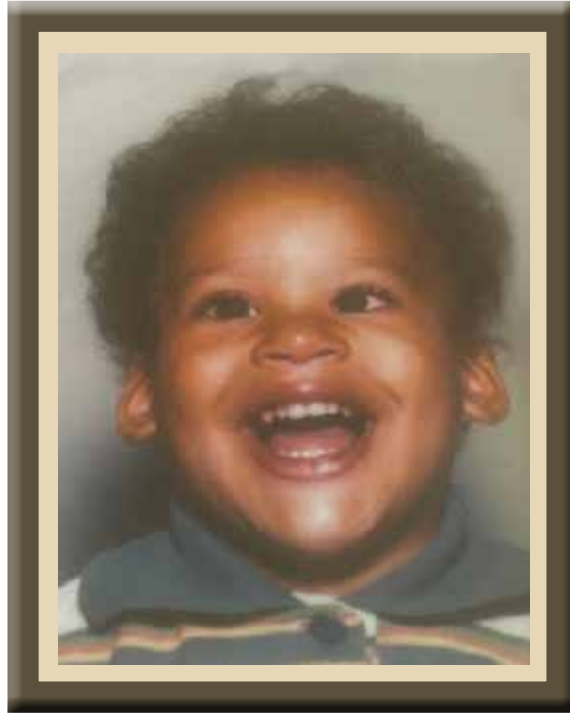
Every person has their own distinctive story, childhood, and background. There are times when the story of another is difficult for us to understand or relate to, but when told, that story not only can heal others but prove to be powerful in so many lives. Often, we see others and presume that our condition is worse than theirs or that we have had to prevail over more than those around us.

We all have good things that happen to us as well as bad things, but the difference is how we choose to move forward and how we come to our own acceptance of our circumstances.

Tim Baker has been in education for 23 years, but his journey started long ago. His challenges in his childhood led him to believe in the meaning of the words “resilience” and “adversity.” He believes that education can provide immediate change for people and provide a stepping stool to success. Education looks different for everyone and for Tim it was a path that was tough to travel, but in the end, he received some of the best advice and made some of the best choices with the resources he surrounded himself by. Tim used to make excuses for his choices and behaviors, but now he is educated about those excuses and looks at every day as another chance to be great and to make an immediate change. Growing up in and out of the foster care system and eventually being adopted taught him that it doesn’t matter what trauma we go through, it’s about how we educate ourselves about that trauma, how we accept our different pathways, and how we prevail each day. Tim is currently an assistant principal at Geneva High School, who comes to work daily to change lives and to make a positive mark on the culture and community in Geneva.

TELLING MY STORY:

Education was not important when I grew up and neither were SEL skills. Mental health was not spoken about and for me, it drove me to be silent on many things in my childhood, including abuse, racial speech, and neglect. You see, I learned many years ago from a social worker that I worked with at my job at Monroe 2 BOCES that accepting our life pathways and faults was the hardest thing I would have to do. I grew up loathing folks around me for their progress in life, the support they tried to give, the feelings I had toward Caucasian men and women due to the abuse my birth mother subjected me to, and then my adoptive family. Nevertheless, to say you could call



me a storm that was ready to wreak havoc on everything was an understatement. I walked around making excuses, blaming people for my mistakes in life, blaming the system, and furthermore my adoptive parents for even adopting me. I would find myself asking the question, why did you even adopt me if all you do is call me names and attack me all the time? I remember I used to get birthday cards and cakes with decorative language that would not only be hateful, but deep-down infuriating. All the while I knew I was stuck with nowhere to go. Perseverance and choices became real when I accepted who I was as a person, and how I reclaimed that acceptance daily. When I present to schools, I share my story in full length and the challenges that helped me gain acceptance and healing. Understanding what racism looked like, felt like, and sounded like guided me in a way that helped me try to create a surrounding of importance and perseverance.

Resources that helped me get to where I am today:

Fisher, Antwone Q., Rivas, Mim E.: Amazon.com: Books

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (cdc.gov)

Goggins, David. (2018). *Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds*: 9781544512280: Amazon.com: Books

Anderson, Jeremy. (2015). *Top Motivational Speaker Spotlight* (2015) - IMDb

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