

Grace Z., former student of Director Carole Alexis

Dear Ms. Alexis,

I hope you have been well recently.

My name is Grace Z. I don't know if you remember me or not; I did not study with you for very long nor was I a star dancer in the class. As a matter of fact, I was probably the worst dancer in level 2 at the time (given I was a bit younger than the other girls) but my technique was by far the worst and my natural limitations were mostly the cause of that. I was not as flexible as M. S., I was not as graceful or as skilled as B. D. or R. S. or J. M., nor was I as prodigious or capable as M. H. who was the youngest in the class. But you have impacted my life a great deal.

You taught me in my fourth grade year in the school year of 2009-2010 at [...]. I was nine for most of that year and turned ten in May. I always thought that I was an awful dancer, and I knew it, too, because I looked in the mirror and I saw the other girls with their backs arched like swans in the choreography. But I would look at myself and I saw a duck who was trying to arch her back and extend her neck, but I couldn't. But you kept saying that I was dancing beautifully, and that I lived up to my name "Grace." I didn't always believe it, but it helped my own self-esteem.

You were always so encouraging and managed to pick out the best parts of myself as a dancer, being the girl that rarely forgot her black waist-elastic or being the baby of the class and trying harder to turn out of point my foot than the oldest girls.

You taught me the artistry in dance. I grew up as an artist and a musician, and you always complemented me for being a pianist. The time I showed you my painting, you made me feel like it was more of a masterpiece than it really was, looking back at it now. You taught me to allow myself to love something that I wasn't naturally inclined at, and even though I don't dance anymore, that year changed my appreciation of dance and allowed me to experience a true artist and master of ballet.

Thinking back on it now I am almost to the point of tears; you really had a great impact on me and I want to thank you for those nine months that you taught me the true art of ballet.

In english class, we have been assigned to write vignettes (little stories) about ourselves, and I wanted to dedicate one to you. It is written about my fourth grade experience and what you have done for me. I have attached my first draft and hope that you might have time to read it.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Grace Z.

14 years old