

Confidence of a Friend

Success is often measured by the ability to overcome adversity. But it is often the belief of others that gives us the courage to try.

J.K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* book series, began writing at age 6. In her biography, she remembers with great fondness when her good friend, Sean, whom she met in secondary school, became the first person to encourage her and help build the confidence that one day she would be a very good writer.

“He was the first person with whom I really discussed my serious ambition to be a writer,” she said. “He was also the only person who thought I was bound to be a success at it, which meant much more to me than I ever told him at the time.”

Despite many setbacks, Rowling persevered in her writing, particularly fantasy stories. But it wasn't until 1990 that she first conceived the idea about Harry Potter.

As she recalls, it was on a long train journey from London to Manchester when the “idea of Harry Potter simply fell into my head. To my immense frustration, I didn't have a functioning pen with me, and I was too shy to ask anybody if I could borrow one. I think, now, that this was probably a good thing, because I simply sat and thought, for four (delayed train) hours, and all the details bubbled up in my brain, and this scrawny, black-haired, bespectacled boy who didn't know he was a wizard became more and more real to me.”

That same year, her mother passed away after a 10-year battle with multiple sclerosis, which deeply affected her writing. She went on to marry and had a daughter, but separated from her husband shortly afterward.

During this time, Rowling was diagnosed with clinical depression. Unemployed, she completed her first novel in area cafes, where she could get her daughter to fall asleep.

After being rejected by 12 publishing houses, the first *Harry Potter* novel was sold to a small British publishing house. Now, with seven books that have sold more than 500 million copies in 64 languages, J.K. Rowling is the highest earning novelist in history.

And it all began with her commitment to writing that was fostered by the confidence of a friend.

The question for us, then is this: Who needs your confidence-building assurance? Is it a friend (as was the case with Rowling)? Someone who reports to you in the workplace? A fellow worker? A family member?

Lives, and careers, can be magically transformed.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter