

Show Business. Maybe?

In his autobiography, *Leading with My Chin*, former *Tonight Show* host Jay Leno recounts his struggles in school, and how one teacher got him thinking about his life's direction. He wrote:

Another teacher who made a huge impression was Mr. Walsh. For whatever reason, he was always assigned to oversee detention duty in the library. And since I was always in detention, we'd sit together almost every day.

Mr. Walsh was one of those guys who would laugh at anything. Tell him the simplest joke and he'd break up. Everything was hilarious to this man. So I'd have new stories for him all the time.

One day, he said to me, "Why don't you think about going into show business?"

The idea never even occurred to me. I didn't know anybody in show business. The closest thing was an eighth-grade teacher who did magic tricks at student assemblies. And that was unbelievable! Someone we know who could actually entertain people!

When you grow up in a small town like Andover, Massachusetts, show business is the farthest thing from being a career option. But Mr. Walsh's words ignited something in me. I began telling people that I wanted to one day become a comedian.

Dubbed by media and his peers as the "hardest working man in show business," Leno performed everywhere he could, from college campuses to Carnegie Hall to Las Vegas. He always wanted to host *The Tonight Show*, and he achieved that goal in 1992 when he replaced the late-night television legend Johnny Carson.

Leno shared his unique wit with *The Tonight Show* audience for 17 years before launching a new prime-time show in 2009.



The question begs to be asked: Who was responsible for pointing you in your life's direction? And who along the way helped make it happen?

It's always nice, and important, to reflect with gratitude on those who impacted your life in such meaningful ways, but thanksgiving for what they did is best expressed in how we pay it forward, how we encourage, guide, mentor someone else. To do so and to watch them flower in a career calling brings true inner joy.

The unfolding of your words gives light (Psalm 119:130 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter