

HAWAIIAN
SUNRISE

to

SUNSET

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*A Middle School Counselor's
Diary of a Working Day*

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A Middle School Counselor's Diary of a Working Day
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*DEDICATED TO MY STUDENTS OF
YESTERYEAR.
WHEREVER YOU MAY BE -- LET IT NOT BE FORGOTTEN
THE MEMORIES WE SHARED IN THE DAYS
OF YOUR YOUTH.*

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Introduction

I NEVER COULD have imagined that I would endure in a system where I would be working with adolescents or teenagers, much less that I would retire from that system.

After more than three decades of laboring and striving to impress upon these students values and character education, I ascertained that each of these individuals had a story to be told, and in my experiences in the intermediate or middle school level, there were many stories that were sad, some joyful, many good, some bad, but they all shared one common denominator and that was that they needed someone or somebody to lean on outside of the home environment, and/or they needed a tough love approach.

I have written an account based on my experiences of some of my kids involved in the daily trials and tribulations as a counselor in a middle school.

I make no apologies for the language or methods I used in working with the students, as I felt that the only way I could do my job and be responsible for my students was to do it my way.

Definitely, I had to take into consideration the pulse of my students and then perceive each student individually according to their needs, desires, and wants.

I started slowly within the system and, finally able to recognize my strengths and weaknesses, I proceeded to do what I had to do as a counselor in working with each and every one of my students.

I endeavored to recognize all my students but, numbers being

what they were, sometimes that was impossible, although I did make every attempt to confer with each of my students during the school year. I can only hope that as they moved on they remembered their roots and the people who have played a small part in their lives as they begin their journey -- or are on their journey -- into the community as adults.

After more than thirty years, I retired from the Hawaii State Department of Education, satisfied with my body of work as only I could be in seeing many of my former students who still keep in contact with me.

My days as a middle school counselor were long and tireless but very enjoyable and rewarding, from sunrise to sunset.

Sunrise

DRIVING TO WORK in the early morning hours gives me a chance to enjoy my serenity and reflect on what I have to do for the day.

Sometimes what I think I have to do isn't actually what I end up doing.

You know the old saying, "The best laid plans can go awry," or something like that.

Well, I enjoy my drive and get to see the freshness of the day many others don't get to see at that early morning hour.

The sight of the morning dew and the energy and pulse of the city are just awakening, although as I drive to work I know very well that there are people going home from a night of hard labor.

Arriving at work, I always have that extra spring in my step in the morning, and I look forward to sitting in the solitude of my office and immersing myself in another world, reading the newspaper, despite reading about the good, the bad, and the ugly of the previous day's events.

I love to recline in my uneven chair that tilts to one side like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, but it gives me amusement and a self-deprecating humor before the actual day starts with the ringing of the morning bell.

Usually, my phone starts ringing an hour after I arrive at school, as many of my students' parents, or parents of other students, are calling in the absences of their child from school.

Oh, I get a few complaints or concerns about their child's work

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performance, but mostly the conversation is quite pleasant in the morning.

A few students start drifting in and sit in my office at that early morning hour, as they commute from the country to attend our school, and they usually come in with a smile and a doughnut which I honestly say, without any selfishness, I thoroughly enjoy and appreciate, as that sugar gives me an added boost to my adrenalin level, which I need on a daily basis at work.

As the sunrise settles in the cloudless sky, I brace myself for another day of self-fulfillment as I thoroughly enjoy seeing the faces of my students with that eagerness for learning.

And so it begins: another day in my journey as a middle school counselor.