

Fred Hawthorne

Childhood

I was born on October 17, 1977 in Harlem, New York. A single mother and wonderful grandparents raised me. In 1985 in search of a better life my mom, sister, and I moved to Los Angeles, California. Although I was child, I understood the significance of needing a fresh start, and the faith-based teachings of my mom and grandparents would be the foundation I needed to fulfill the potential that God placed within me.

I felt this foundation settle in my mind and my heart as I witnessed my mom's perseverance and unwavering faith as she juggled a full-time job, being a full-time student, and a single mother. She always instilled in my sister and me the importance of education. However, I wasn't able to grasp its true importance until I watched my mom graduate and fulfill her dream. It was then that I knew I could take a different path than the gang infested and drug-laced path that many kids in my neighborhood blindly followed. I could make my own path and leave it for others to follow.

I started my journey in High School. I was an active member of The Los Angeles County Sheriff Explorer Program, which instilled discipline in me that was vacated by an absent father. I applied this discipline on the basketball court and learned about teamwork through my teammates. In 1995 I graduated with a Basketball Scholarship to California Baptist College.

College Years

After only one year at California Baptist College I transferred to Whittier College where I immediately felt a sense of community. It was nurturing to be on a campus where everyone knows your name and in a community where family values and personal accountability are natural characteristics. I told myself that Whittier would be a great place to get married, buy a house, raise a family and live beside the same neighbors for generations.

I wanted to give back to the community that welcomed me with open arms. Working at the Boys and Girls Club gave me the opportunity to mentor and tutor children in the 5th Dimension Program. I was also able to co-found the Whittier Boys & Girls Club Basketball Program.

In 2000 I became the first person in my family to graduate from college with a Bachelor's Degree in History. I could see that my path was extending with each stride that I took to receive my diploma.

Professional Years

With the spirit of community now deeply routed inside me and my path laid out even more clearly, my desire to serve others continued to grow. I became a Special Education

teacher. I passed on to my students the teachings that my mother and community taught me, hoping that they would see a clear path for themselves; and they did. They became motivators and role models for their peers and achieved goals that that seemed impossible to reach at one point. For three years my students and I ran the Los Angeles Marathon and raised about \$25,000 for various cancer organizations. Although I feel like I have many more eyes to open, I have been honored with the “Teacher of the Year” award twice and the “Outstanding Educator” award four times. In addition, I received an award from the Mayor of the City of Duarte for my dedication to the community.

The impact my students had on me was so great that they were part of my inspiration to begin writing. I reflected on my life experiences and the journey I took to get where I was at that time and created my first published book *Mud Free Rose* in 2006. I began sharing my story publicly through Spoken Word at different venues, including different high schools and college campuses, and have received a compelling response. I even received a thank you letter from a prison inmate, whom I still write letters of encouragement to. These responses motivated me to write more so that I could inspire more people and touch more lives. My second book *Liefe* was recently published in 2008, and I have two other books that have yet to be completed.

My passion for basketball and physical wellness gave me another avenue in which I could serve and motivate others. In 2005 I started my own personal training business “Better Body Today” and created plyo-dynamics, which is a combination of plyometrics and strength training. I have been fortunate to have trained people from all walks of life, including professional athletes and soccer moms. Through my training sessions my goal for them is to become healthy and confident individuals both inside and out.

At the age of 29 years I felt more healthy, motivated, and confident than I had ever felt before. Thus I began acting and modeling. Although I only pursued those careers for a short period of time, it enhanced my self-confidence, communication skills, and business skills. It also confirmed in me that my purpose in life was greater than reaching out to people as a fictional character. I wanted people to know who I am and what I stand for.