

Wahlert High School  
Dubuque, Iowa

Dear Paulo Coelho,

A friend of mine gave me your novel "The Alchemist" a little over a year ago when I was going through a hard time. She read it herself and told me about the strength and guidance that it gave to her and she was sure it would do the same for myself. As soon as I got home from school I started to read it. I wasn't able to put it down until I finished it, and after doing so I remember just staring at the last page feeling like time was frozen.

I realized how lost I was. What I was lacking in my life was a "Personal Legend." I had friends that care, a family that would give the world and a wonderful girl that cares for me as I care for her. However, your novel made me realize that while I need all those people, I need a "Personal Legend," an ultimate goal or journey, of my life just as much.

In the end, Santiago's journey took him right back to where he started. That goes to show that where you end up is irrelevant. More than once, he thought about quitting his journey but every time he saw it creep back up on him. That is what the journey is all about. It isn't about where you end up, it's about having the courage to complete your journey. Thanks to your novel, I have found my "Personal Legend." I know what my journey is and with the support of those who love me, I have the courage to obtain it.

Sincerely,

Eric Darrah