**SCLA 102: Transformative Texts, Critical Thinking & Communication II: Modern World**

**Your “Piece of Paper” (375-500 words)**

In her book, *Rowing the Atlantic: Lessons Learned on the Open Ocean*, Roz Savage talks about being at a crossroad in her life. Roz felt as if she had been “merely existing, rather than living” (2009, p. 54). She began to question her life’s purpose, asking “if I could be whoever I wanted, who would I be in the future?” (pp. 54-55).

This prompted Roz to write two versions of her obituary. The first version was the one she thought *could* be written, assuming she made drastic and courageous changes—living fearlessly, embracing and experiencing life and dreaming “BIG.” The second obituary was the one Roz thought *would* be written if she didn’t make these changes.

“The difference between the two, and the difference how I felt as I was writing them, was startling. I realized that if I carried on living as I was, I would not end up with the life that I wanted. As I lay on my deathbed I wanted to be able to look back over my life and be proud of what I achieved, but that wasn’t where I was going,” observed Roz (p. 56). She eventually mustered “the self-confidence and self-belief to take [her] dreams off the page and translate them into reality,” (p. 56) and begin creating her legacy. It started with Roz rowing solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Like Roz, Sebastian “Seb” Terry found himself at a crossroad during his early 20s when his best friend, Detho, unexpectedly died, changing the way he “viewed the world and [himself]” (2011, p. 10). “Death sparks reflection, first of the deceased, and then of yourself” (p. 13), noted Seb; and he began asking life-changing questions. “If Detho knew that . . . particular day was going to be his last, would he have changed anything? Would he have changed his last week, his last month or even his last year? Ultimately, given another chance, would Detho have changed the way he lived up to that point, full stop” (p. 13). Seb concluded the answer was no; however, he couldn’t say the same for himself. This led him to create a list of 100 things that he “had always wanted to do” (p. 14). Seb began to dream “BIG,” determined “not to waste [his] life from that day on”(p. 15).

**Two pieces of paper—one with an obituary, the other with a list of 100 things—were both catalysts for changing the direction of two people’s lives and beginning their incredible journeys of self-discovery.**

**What do you want written on your piece of paper, letter to your future self or obituary? What do you want to experience? What do you want to accomplish? How do you want to be remembered? In the words of the king of Salem from *The Alchemist*, what do you want your “Personal Legend” to be? Reflect on the books, poems and speeches from this semester to help you answer these types of questions and draft “your piece of paper.” Consider sending whatever you write to your future self via a website like this:** [**https://www.futureme.org/**](https://www.futureme.org/)**.**

***Note: Single-space your paper, and include the word count (body copy only) after the last sentence of your assignment (e.g., Word Count: 450).*** *If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to ask me. I’m here to help you learn and succeed!*

-SCLA 102-