

BioGamer Girl: Video Games Saved My Life

Written by Amanda Dyar

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G.K. Chesterton once stated, "Fairy-tales are more than true; not because they tell us dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten." Reading this as a young girl, it changed not only how I viewed life, but how I lived it.

As a parent today, I look into the beautiful blue eyes of my children and never want them to shed a single tear of sadness. The pain we experience in life can burrow deep down into every fiber of our muscles and slowly seeps its way into every crevice of our being. Pain is our body's way of telling us to stop before any more damage can be done. The more we resist the pain, the higher its intensity becomes, but only in that resistance do we develop. Those moments we spend breaking out of the shell are the ones that give us the strength to grow.



Millions of people face the challenges of growing up in a household with poor family structure and problematic substance abuse. Those children who grow up in this type of environment are three times more likely to suffer physical, emotional and psychological abuse. I was one of those people. The problem with the type of pain that comes from these experiences is that after time passes, it becomes less visible to the human eye. The body repairs itself, and scars cover those once-oozing wounds. However, the infection spreads throughout the heart and mind, leaving open sores that never heal. This is where my love for games and movies came in, and not only changed my life, but empowered it.

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My gaming experiences started with the epic SUPER MARIO BROS. franchise. I was able to escape into a fantasy world where I could be anything I wanted to be, and at that moment it just happened to be a short, stocky plumber who could shoot fireballs from his fingertips. When you are a child, you're often incapable of dealing with the grown-up happenings around you. The creative outlets that the imagination offers can ultimately save your life, and at that time when I needed it most, games gave me that outlet. Some of the first survival-horror (though the term really wasn't coined until a decade later) games I played were MANIAC MANSION and FRIDAY THE 13TH—two titles that started a whirlwind of chaos in my small, feeble mind and ignited a fire within me.

The darkness intrigued me in an intrinsic, morbid way. I not only appreciated and loved what the horror genre offered, but in my own way, I related to it. The games and films I came to enjoy were more than entertainment, but symbols of the excessive darkness and oppression that existed around me. NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD was where my love of horror films started, and it showed how people could face death and their fears straight on and either succumb to or overcome the darkness trying to engulf them; I later got to meet some of its creators and cast (see the photo below). Today, looking back, not only am I proud of my past, but grateful for it.

BioGamer Girl is a term I derived to represent strong females who appreciate and love the survival-horror genre. It isn't just about chicks who like gaming and horror, but women who are empowered by it and gain strength from what it stands for. These women are not just heroes in the games they play, but in the lives of others and, most importantly, in their own.

