This I Believe: Finding your voice in community

For your first major writing assignment you will express a personal belief through writing. Although you might take a stand on something, this does not mean you will persuade your audience to believe what you believe, but you will express what you believe by incorporating personal experience. At the same time, while you are establishing your belief, readers should be able to relate to a more global argument as well. This is will give you an opportunity to practice establishing an argument for a variety of audiences. 4-5 pages

Your task: Hone in on a personal belief and compose an argument that demonstrates why this is significant, not only to your narrative, but to a global audience.

I expect you to:

Consider what you have learned by actively reading “This I Believe” essayists, and demonstrate your understanding of this style within your own narrative.
Situate narrative within a specific community and show how this community has affected your specific belief.
Make an original and thoughtful statement (belief)
Incorporate personal experience (story, memory, observation, etc.)
Avoid summarizing, but explain and describe.
Be creative and draw your reader in—think audience!
Ultimately make an argument that embodies your specific narrative, but is also a global argument with which readers can draw connections

Ask yourself the following questions to establish an argument within your narrative:
In what do I believe?
Who is my audience?
Does my personal experience within my community connect to my belief?
How have other authors of This I Believe statements established ethos, affected audience (pathos), and made a convincing argument (logos)?
Am I following the Evaluation Criteria provided to me?

Format:
4-5 pages (typed)
12 pt. font
Double Spaced

This essay is 15% of your final grade. While the first draft will not be graded, your efforts in drafting, revising, and participating in workshops will be considered when grading your final draft.

Tentative Schedule for Main Due Dates:

Thursday January 30        first draft in google docs collection; Peer Review
Tuesday February 4          Intensive Review (5 candidates)
Thursday February 6         Final Draft (hard copy)

“It would be easier to enumerate the items I do not believe in, than the other way around. And yet in talking to people, in listening to them, I have come to realize that I don’t have a monopoly on the world’s problems. Others have their share, often far bigger than mine. This has helped me to see my own in truer perspective: and in learning how others have faced their problems — this has given me fresh ideas about how to tackle mine.”

—Edward R. Murrow (1950s host of the “This I Believe” radio program)