

On Trying To Understand The Universe and Life

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On Trying To Understand The Universe and Life

I sat there in awe. I was in awe at the man's genius. I was in awe of his life. It could be described by no less than miraculous. I was especially shocked at the way the narrator of the movie, A Brief History of Time, related the discovery of his illness. He explained, "The doctors told him that he had about two and a half years to live and only his heart, his lungs, and his brain would eventually remain functional while everything else in his body would turn into a cabbage"(1) The words echoed through my mind, "Only his heart, his lungs, and his brain...". It seemed a terrifying condition to befall a youth in his early twenties. But amazingly, as the story went on, I soon found out that for him, the beginning of his illness marked a turning point from which his life truly begun. And I was at awe at God. Simply at awe.

His name is Stephen Hawking. He is considered to be one of the greatest minds of Science. He was diagnosed with [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis](#), ALS, in 1962. He is still alive. He describes his philosophy in life prior to his diagnose in these terms, "My attitude was that nothing was worth an [effort](#)"(2) In the movie about his book, A Brief History of Time, it is explained how this philosophy was evident in his scholastic work where, in spite

of his genius, he merely maintained an average standing as a student.

Besides his diagnosed condition, the movie also points to another factor which reshaped his philosophy and outlook on life. He found love in the heart of a woman, Jane Wilde, who testified, "Without my faith in God, I wouldn't have been able to live in this situation (her husband's condition); I would not have been able to marry Stephen in the first place because I wouldn't have had the optimism to carry me through and I wouldn't have been able to carry on with it" (3) With these two events, things for Stephen began to matter and he began to find meaning in putting forth the effort. His accomplishments, exemplified in a Brief History of Time, certainly testify to that. As the story unravels, he not only lived past two and a half years, he lived. He wrote, he studied, he taught, he questioned as his condition progressed; and still he lives.

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