National Public Radio (NPR) airs a weekly “This I Believe” essay in which “Americans from all walks of life share the personal philosophies and core values that guide their daily lives” (NPR website). The writers’ ages, sex, ethnic backgrounds, or socio-economic backgrounds all vary, but the experiences they relate often powerfully illustrate the point they are trying to make.

For this writing assignment, you will share a personal philosophy of life or core value through a personal story that makes a clear point (argument). The narrative you relate will form the backbone of your argument, but you also need to spend some time weaving in how this relates to the world at large, and, ultimately, the point you are arguing.

Here are a couple suggested formats:

• **Introduction**: Write one or two paragraphs to explain the issue, intrigue readers, and give them a sense of what you will discuss.

• **Tell a personal story in several paragraphs**

• **Conclude**, returning to the point you want to leave with readers, connecting it to your story (Include the phrase “I believe . . .”)  

• **Introduction** (same as above)

• **Relate a couple related stories (that you have personally experienced or observed) in several paragraphs**

• **Conclude** (as above)  

• **Come up with your own creative organization**, making sure that the point you are arguing is clear.

**Topic choices**: The topic you may choose is wide open. Go to the NPR website to read several of the essays there. Also consider the following:

• an occasion when you realized you had a special skill, ambition, or problem

• a time when you became aware of injustice, selflessness, heroism, sexism, racism

• a difficult situation when you had to make a tough choice

• a time when someone you admired let you down and what you learned

• an occasion when things did not turn out as expected or an unexpected encounter

**A final reminder**: you are not only telling a story, but making an argument related to the story or stories you tell. Have at least a tentative point in mind as you begin drafting. But who knows—maybe a new point will emerge through your writing, so leave yourself open to possibilities!

**Format**: 2-3 pages (minimum 700 words), double-spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman, 1” margins, numbered pages

(Please see reverse)
Due dates and timeline:
One page of writing: Monday, Jan. 11
First draft: Wednesday, Jan. 13
Written peer response for 2 peer partners: Friday, January 15
Final draft: Wednesday, January 20

Please hand in all of the above in a pocket folder when you submit the final draft.

Please set up your paper this way:

Your name
WR122 - Walker
Essay #1
January 20, 2010

Center your (creative) title here

Tab your paragraph indents. Use Times New Roman, 12 font. Make sure all pages are numbered with your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner. Double space evenly throughout your paper. In other words, DO NOT put extra spaces between paragraphs! Please remember to staple your final draft. Points will be deducted for incorrect formatting.