

MAKE YOUR MARK

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I recently watch an old video from our National President, and it inspired me about for myself and the Auxiliary's mission. She was speaking about the story of the pencil. I found the story was attributed to author Paulo Coelho and it is the following:

The Story of the Pencil

by Paulo Coelho

A boy was watching his grandmother write a letter. At one point he asked:

'Are you writing a story about what we've done? Is it a story about me?'

His grandmother stopped writing her letter and said to her grandson:

'I am writing about you, actually, but more important than the words is the pencil I'm using. I hope you will be like this pencil when you grow up.'

Intrigued, the boy looked at the pencil. It didn't seem very special.

'But it's just like any other pencil I've ever seen!'

'That depends on how you look at things. It has five qualities which, if you manage to hang on them, will make you a person who is always at peace with the world.'

*'**First quality:** you are capable of great things, but you must never forget that there is a hand guiding your steps. We call that hand God, and He always guides us according to His will.'*

*'**Second quality:** now and then, I have to stop writing and use a sharpener. That makes the pencil suffer a little, but afterwards, he's much sharper. So, you, too, must learn to bear certain pains and sorrows, because they will make you a better person.'*

*'**Third quality:** the pencil always allows us to use an eraser to rub out any mistakes. This means that correcting something we did is not necessarily a bad thing; it helps to keep us on the road to justice.'*

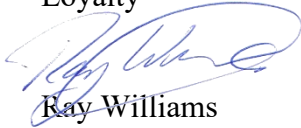
*'**Fourth quality:** what really matters in a pencil is not its wooden exterior, but the graphite inside. So always pay attention to what is happening inside you.'*

*'Finally, the pencil's **fifth quality:** it always leaves a mark. in just the same way, you should know that everything you do in life will leave a mark, so try to be conscious of that in your every action'*

This simple story carries a powerful inspirational message about character, perseverance, and purpose. For me, this story is inspirational and can be applied to our mission of supporting our Veterans, family and community. We are all capable of incredible things (1st quality), however we can drift "off mission" and sometimes it takes commitment and hard of work to sharpen our focus. (2nd quality). Mistakes are a part of growth and learning, correct your course and move on (3rd quality). What matters is what drives you (4th quality). Being a VFW Auxiliary member I know you have a deep passion for our country, Veterans and their families. And that leaves the

5th quality, “leave a mark” and this is where I challenge you to leave your mark. Whether it is leading this organization or helping one person, just leave your mark.

Loyalty



Ray Williams
2025 – 2026 VFS Chair

