



Angela Simpson

Teacher

**Interviewed by Gaby Mikael
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Angela Simpson was born in upstate New York in 1967. She graduated from Staples High School in 1985 and went to Skidmore College, where she majored in art. She worked as a fashion designer in New York City and Greenwich, Connecticut before starting at Staples in 2001, only a few weeks before the attacks.

What were you doing during the attack?

I was teaching a drawing 1 class, I was a brand new teacher not even 2 weeks into my teaching career when it happened and I wasn't sure what the protocol should be for a situation like that. In fact I don't think even veteran teachers even quite knew what to do at the time I felt the most important thing I could do is to keep a calm environment in the classroom until we got further instructions over the PA about what to do.

How did you learn of the attack?

Actually a student had excused himself to go to the bathroom and he came back and had heard of it elsewhere. When he told me at first I didn't really believe him I was like what are you talking about and then we started to get more and more info about what was going on. I think the fact that we were all so in shock sort of helped us not to panic immediately, although some people felt more comfortable continuing to draw. Some people wanted to talk among themselves or call their parents, and that was all fine with me. We all coped in our own way. Once the reality of the situation started to settle in, the kids wanted to make sure their parents were home and OK and all I thought about was wanting to pick my children up from daycare, just kind of go home, hunker down and be safe together.

How did you react immediately?

My immediate reaction was disbelief. I just thought it was bizarre. I didn't think automatically that there was any foul play, I thought it was just a freak accident that an airplane hit a skyscraper, and then the second one happened and you start to realize there was some intention and some foul play.

Do you think your life would be any different today if the attacks didn't happen?

Just a general sense of vulnerability in the sense that there are people in the world who wish to harm innocence, and because that so foreign to how I think. I would say that a positive affect is a conscious knowledge that we need to cherish our loved ones everyday, because you never know when something is going to happen.

Do you remember the government's response to the attacks?

I think the U.S population more than the government. Everyone pulled together, and came together. I remember driving across the bridge downtown and seeing dozens of flags downtown. I think that brought us together. There was almost less road rage, everyone was nicer to each other, because we all felt like victims.

The international community?

Even people in Europe related and sympathized for us so there was that comfort there.

Do you know anyone who was directly affected by the attacks?

Not someone that I knew well, but I was a Staples student in the 80's and someone in my class and his brother worked in the Twin Towers, and I found out later that they both had perished.

What did you think about terrorism before the attacks? Did your view on terrorism change after the attacks? How?

I think I'm such a trusting person that I didn't really dwell on behaviors like that. I always thought of terrorism as stuff that happened in different countries and I tend to look at the world through rose colored glasses, I don't want to expect people to be unkind. I didn't expect it to touch our personal lives. It made it much more real and threatening.

In the next coming days, what was class like?

I think everyone was quiet and contemplative, nervous.

Had you talked about terrorism beforehand?

No, it wasn't something that touched our lives, I didn't think about that as something I needed to address.

Did you have a cell phone?

No, but I remember offering people my office phone. Information started coming from the televisions, but they started turning the TV's off after a while, to try to calm everyone down.