

Subj: **from an ex- Assistant**
Date: 5/31/2007 10:54:57 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: P.
To: PETERSKLAR

Dear Peter,

I remember a long time ago you talking about not going straight to college and how young people should live on their own for a year before going to school... or something like that. I didn't listen to you then, but then again I didn't listen to most of the things you said because I didn't believe you. because I thought I knew everything and I thought I knew better. But I guess most 16 year old girls think that.

I'm reminded of a song that has the line "I wish that I knew what I know now when I was younger".

Sometimes I do wish that but I realize that had I not done the things I had, walked the paths chose to walk, or made the choices I did, I wouldn't know any of the things I do now.

I do believe the last you saw or heard of me was about 2 years ago when you were touring in IL. I dropped in on one of your lectures, freshly dropped out of high school and not really going anywhere, spoke with you briefly, left early... you know, just being the way I am.. or at least the way I was. It's amazing to think that only two years ago I had nothing, and for the last three months I've been living in a studio apartment in the heart of Chicago, paying my own way and making a life for myself. I don't have everything, I'm not even close to that, but I have everything I need right now.

After dropping out of high school I lived with my dad for a while, then moved back into my mom's. I tried going to the local community college but never managed to finish a single class. I started working mostly, though the jobs that I did have didn't pay well and were pretty crappy. I'd like to think that the only good thing those jobs did for me was fuel my desire for a better life, but they also taught me that sometimes you just have to keep working hard in the hopes of something better even if it doesn't come right away. I worked on and off between a small museum, a Coldstone Creamery, and as a theatre technician in the college theatre. For the first year that's pretty much all I did. Work, attempt to go to school, drop the class, work some more. It was a very boring year spent in a very stagnant life, sleeping till noon and living in my mom's basement, struggling every now and then with how depressing my life had become, battling psycho ex boyfriends (you were right about those too:BTW) and just trying to find something to fight for because I guess I didn't think I was worth it.

I couldn't really tell you the moment where everything changed. I don't think it was just one. It was more like a series of moments that led up to me being sick of it all and taking control. I started exercising. One day I just looked in the mirror and realized that I didn't want to be the person I saw, that I didn't LIKE the person I saw. That I was tired of hating myself and letting my size restrict me. So I changed. I started walking outside every night. It started slow, 20 minutes. After a week or so I was walking for about an hour every night and sometimes more. I got a gym membership and started working out every day. Since my hours at work were less than demanding, I had plenty of time during the day to hit up the local park district when everyone else was at work. I started eating better, drinking more water, and lo and behold in a little less than a year I had lost 40 pounds (though at this point I think I'm about the same size you remember me as, just taller). It was nice. It was a great change and it made me feel better knowing that really, I WASN'T the person I had been then. Because you know when you start making one part of your life better, then the rest follows suit.

I started the beginning of this year fresh. Happily single and looking forward to the exciting new places my life would take me. It was an excellent start. I started feeling the growing need to move out of my house but knew I couldn't handle it financially with my then-current jobs. Then one day I got a phone call, from my Dad of all people (dads are great like that) telling me about a job in the City that he knew about from one of his clients or friends or something like that. An office manager/ glorified secretary position working for an electrical contractor. I was hesitant but with a GED, no resume, and not a single college credit to my name, a walked in there and gave it my best. With my brains, my wits, and I'd like to think my looks, I was able to get a job that then gave me the ability to move out of my mom's basement. I took a chance and I got it. I will always remember to take more chances, especially when I have nothing to lose.

So here I am. After living in a studio apartment for three months on a sub lease, I just finished moving out of there and into a spacious two bedroom condo with my roommate Cassie. I live a wonderful life, with money in my pocket, food in my tummy, and a roof over my head. I pay my bills, I take care of the i gotta take care of, and I am able to live a life that, at 19, makes me perfectly content. I've done a lot, see a lot, struggled, fallen, and brushed myself off to show myself that I can succeed. I even enrolled in an internet English 101 course for the fall with my favorite English teacher at the community college.

I guess I just wanted to let you know that life is good. I don't know if you have ever thought of me or wondered what became of me but you told me once to keep in touch. You told me when I was still a spoiled, 16 year old who thought she knew everything. Now I come back to you, maybe not an adult, but a mature capable human being and a contributing tax-paying, member of society. I just wanted to let you know how things were going and that I hope our paths can cross once again. I also wanted to thank you for impacting my life in such a positive

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way, even though I didn't realize it at the time. I hope you and the business are doing well and I hope to hear from you somewhere down the line

Keep in touch.

-Michelle

ex-Assistant for the Beginnings Workshop

P.S. please do not highlight and copy and paste all the times I said "you were right about" and post it on your website. They have to learn on their own :o)...and they wouldn't believe you anyways.

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