

Learning for Life by Erika Dove

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Everyone has their own reasons for not completing high school. For some it's very personal and they may not speak of their experiences, but I feel that my story could possibly inspire someone else to make the same decision to go back to school.

I should have graduated in 2007. The same year my daughter was born. I decided to quit school at the beginning of my senior year. I devoted all my time to raising my little girl. A job that has proven to be more rewarding than I could have imagined.

It has been over ten years since then, and my daughter is growing into a beautiful young lady. She now has a little brother, and their daddy will soon be my husband. I feel like I'm doing a wonderful job raising two loving, caring, brilliant individuals. Everyday they make me so proud, but now I need them to be proud of me too.

I find it kind of ironic that the reasons for me to quit school are the same reasons for me to want to go back. It is important to me that my children see the value of education and perseverance. I plan to lead by example and show them the rewards of hard work.

The thought of going back to school was nerve racking for me. Perhaps it was fear of the unknown, or that I had become too comfortable with being a stay at home mom, but either way I felt anxious about it. I eventually picked up the phone and got in contact with the Adult Learning Center, and I'm so glad I did. The call was the first step to getting the ball rolling, and what brought me into the GED program last September.

My GED experience will be one I will never forget. All of the people I've come in contact with have been so supportive along the way. My fellow classmates have taught me that it doesn't matter your age, education is valuable and can't be taken away. Many of these people have left lasting impacts on my life, but no one as much as my Instructor Joanne McIsaac. She saw potential in me I forgot was there. Joanne has helped me to turn my small dreams into big ones, and I can't think of a time where I've had this much confidence or self esteem. Thanks to her my GED is just the beginning.

I see myself as a goal setter now, and everyday I get a little closer to reaching them. In April I will be writing my last exam and I have full confidence in the fact that I will be receiving my diploma. I'm also pleased to say that pending my results, I've been conditionally accepted into the Business Management program at NBCC in the fall. This program will lead to a diploma, with the option to continue on to university for another two years for my degree. Six months ago, the thought of going to university seemed impossible, but now it really is a possibility.

If I could share some of my own advice it would be to take that first step, no one can help you if they don't know you need it. I feel I've come a long way from where I made my first step, and I can actually say I'm proud of myself.

A meaningful quote by Angela Davis: She says, "The most important aspect of acquiring knowledge is realizing how much more there is to learn." This is so true; never again will I be sitting in the background. I plan to seize every opportunity that comes my way.

Written by Erika Dove; Teacher: Joanne Mc Isaac, Woodstock Adult Learning Centre, Central Valley Adult Learning Assoc.