

Learning changed my life.

There are many reasons I decided to return to learning. Firstly, obtaining a diploma is one of the major goals I had set for myself at a younger age, so not pursuing that goal would be unacceptable. Secondly, I return to learning for my family. As a young mother to five wonderful children, I feel I have a certain level of responsibility to be the most positive and knowledgeable role model that I can be in their lives. Lastly, I once stumbled across a quote about education that I felt spoke to me on a personal level. I'd like to share the moving words of Nelson Mandela himself, to which he said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." My interpretation of these words was that education is the best place for one to gain knowledge, reasoning, and the right skills to make this world a better place.

I didn't always think so highly about education as I do now. At sixteen years old I dropped out of high school; education had always been very difficult for me. In the first grade I was diagnosed with learning disabilities and ADD. Labeled as different, I started to notice my brain wasn't the same as the children in my class. I couldn't learn at the same pace and my thoughts were unfocused and unclear. Instead of learning what was being taught in the classroom, my mind would wander and race. Making even the simplest of work very difficult, soon enough I wholeheartedly believed I was an outsider, lesser than my all peers. I strayed from the idea that I too could one day learn like everyone else.

It wasn't until after the birth of my first child that I started to gain real knowledge and I began to realize learning was important. I also realized that everyone's learning style was different. That's when I set the goal of obtaining a diploma so that I could do more for myself and my children. For the past eight years my children have been my main source of acquiring knowledge. I am very grateful for all of the lessons taught to me in motherhood but unfortunately, with no high school diploma, or college degree, a future career in the field that sparks my interest would be unattainable. I needed to grow academically, so in August of 2021, I made a life altering-decision to return to learning at the age of twenty-five, here at the Bath Adult Learning Center.

The decision to return to learning did not come without doubt and irrational fears for the future. In the weeks approaching my first class I became very nervous. The idea of being a second time drop out surfaced; the thought of what my children would think of me if that were to happen became overwhelming, but I continued on with my plan. I attended my first class, then my second and so on. Soon I began to realize that I could learn; not only that, but learning was something I really enjoyed. My life started to

feel purposeful, I was proud of myself and I finally felt like I was on the path to becoming the best role model I could be for my children.

I am interested in the idea of being a lifelong learner. With that said, when I finish the GED program, I would like to continue my education. I am fairly certain that I want to specialize in helping people with substance abuse. After losing my best friend to addiction and being in recovery myself, I feel I have many qualities that will help to enhance me in this particular field. I didn't always believe in my future and the goals that I have set, but with the help from my very supportive and kind teacher Bev Haines, I now believe this is something I can truly accomplish through learning, dedication, and hard work. I am very grateful for the opportunities learning and the GED program has helped make possible for me and I look forward to my contribution of making this world a better place through my education.

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