

Never Too Late

Chris Lozier – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

As adults, we all have experienced some sort of regret in our lifetime. For me, not finishing high school was at the top of the list of regrets.

At the age of sixteen, I found myself losing interest in school. By grade twelve I had dropped out even though I knew I had great potential. At the time I just didn't realize the importance of graduating and receiving a high school diploma.

Outside of working the odd job for minimum wage, I spent most of the following two years experimenting in drugs, alcohol and partying. As a result, I found my mental health starting to deteriorate. Shortly after my nineteenth birthday I made the decision to head west to British Columbia to try the workforce which was booming at the time.

While spending a large portion of my twenties in British Columbia, I was able to find work in a variety different fields, but always had to start at the bottom being paid the lowest wage possible. Whereas those with a diploma or equivalent often got a position paying a higher wage.

Even though British Columbia was a beautiful place to live and I started the perfect family there, we were forced to move home suddenly when my brother passed away unexpectedly in 2017 to be closer to my mother who took the loss extremely hard.

Tragedy did not end with my brother, as the mother of my children passed away a few short years later in a car accident leaving me to be a single primary caregiver to our two amazing six year old twins. Subsequently, I found myself lost and confused. I knew I had to pull myself together and be the father, roll model and friend my children needed now more than ever.

While part of me dread returning to school, I knew I was not going to excel in the workforce without a higher education. Therefore, I would not be setting a great example for my children. After eighteen years I finally made the decision to walk into NBCC Woodstock to inquire about the GED Program.

Let's be honest, stepping back into the classroom after so many years would be nerve racking for anyone. I certainly did not know what to expect. It didn't take long to feel accepted by my instructor Joanne along with my fellow peers. Even though I didn't believe so much in myself at the time, Joanne had ways to helping me repair my self-confidence.

Since returning to school I've gained so much more confidence in myself that I though was long gone. I've set and crushed multiple goals. I feel now that nothing can stand in my way from achieving anything I set my mind to.

Starting off, I set the goal to pass every exam required to graduate the GED Program which I am one exam away from completion. My next goal was to get accepted into a trade course which I

have been conditionally accepted into the Skilled Trades course in the fall of 2023 pending completion of my final exam. I then went on to quit smoking marijuana, quit drinking alcohol, deleted social media apps, and started exercising and eating healthier. I have no doubt that I will continue to dominate any tasks set in front of me.

That being said, something as small as returning to school has opened doors I thought were forever closed. For that I am grateful. I can genuinely say that this experience has made me a better father, mentor and all around better member of the community.