

Note to Self
By Mr. Neubauer
OMS Dean of Students

If we could live our teenage lives from the perspective of adulthood, we might do a lot of things differently. In the just-published book *Dear Me: A Letter to My Sixteen-Year-Old Self*, dozens of familiar faces look back lovingly, and with a touch of tender advice, on the way they were.

I came across this recently. I have included some excerpts from this book. I wish I had known about this and written one of these for my daughter. It is too late to go back and change our adolescent lives, but you still have the best possible influence over your child's life. Enjoy these "Notes to Self":

Hi Seth,

... Let me just say this—it gets easier. I know right now it stinks, family unit dissolving, personal identity in crisis, constant reminders that you don't belong where you are—but it gets easier. Hard work pays off, and you'll find people and places that allow and encourage you to be the best YOU that you can, so seek them out.

Plus you get much less awkward. You will literally wake up one day and realize you don't have to impress anyone to have them like you. Don't try so hard, and things will get easier.

Don't quit. Don't leave any vision unrealized. Believe in yourself. Actually, I can't stress that enough—no one will believe in you if you don't truly believe in yourself. So work through all the self-doubt and self-loathing and get down to business. You will work for at least the next 30 years, each year harder than the last. I know that doesn't sound so great, but you will make lots of your own stuff and work closely with almost every one of your heroes and they will enjoy it, so that takes the sting out, right?

Last thing, you have to stop wearing what you're wearing. I know you're "making statements" and "challenging stereotypes" but you are trying a little too hard and are just a little misguided. Plus in the future, there's a magic device that links every piece of recorded media together in a way that can be viewed by anyone, anywhere forever and ever. So that commercial you did when you were 7 where you look really stupid, and that sweet summer camp photo from 1982 where you're in shorts and really sunburned? Those will be available into perpetuity, so be careful what you put out there.

Aside from that, it's up to you. Everything that you don't get, everything that you suffer through—all your mistakes and triumphs get you exactly where you need to be. Enjoy the adventure.

Much Love,
Seth Green (Actor)

To my 16-year old self:

Since everyone is always telling you what's important in life, I'm going to tell you what isn't.

1. ... Find the thing that makes you leap out of bed in the morning, that's how badly you want to get to work. So few people in this world can say they love what they do. Isn't that a richness all its own?
2. That guy you cry over every night. You know which one: He broke your heart a thousand ways with one word, one glance? Twenty-five years from now he will call you and tell you that he's found your high school ring in the back of his desk drawer. You'll start talking and he will thank you for being the one constant in his adolescence, when his own family was falling apart. He won't remember hurting you. But when you write, you will remember what it felt like to have that bandage ripped off your heart.
3. The fight you had with your mother this morning. It is hard to imagine that one day you will be exactly where she is, arguing with a 16-year-old. You'll learn to pick your battles. You'll also learn to let go of the ones you think you will carry like a scar, forever. Over the years you'll have confidantes come and go, but your mom will always be your best friend.
4. Calculus. Trust me: You will never use it.
5. Your curls. One day the hair you fruitlessly tried to dominate with blow-dryers and Japanese straightening creams will finally take the upper hand and —Are you sitting down? — you might even grow to love it a little...
6. That you secretly think your brother is a total dork. He is four years younger than you and plays Dungeons & Dragons. But one day when you come home from college you will realize you missed the moment this ugly duckling got all swanned out --- becoming funny and smart and entertaining. And what you will remember about your childhood is not how embarrassed you were by a kid who liked to wear *Star Trek* clothing, but the fact that when you ate Dixie ice cream cups, he always swapped you his chocolate for your vanilla.
7. The bump in your nose. You used to always wonder if everyone noticed it as much as you did. One day you are going to meet a guy who is so cute you cannot believe that he's talking to you, and you are going to become good friends. And then you're going to fall in love. And one day, when you get up the courage to ask him what he thinks of the bump in your nose he's going to say, "What bump?"
8. Being in a hurry. You want it all— college, love, success. The moment you realize you wish you hadn't grown up so fast is the moment it will be too late...
9. Defrosting. You will not be able to remember a single day in your childhood when your mother did not defrost something to be cooked for dinner that night. When you get older you will wonder why you cannot seem to master this simple skill of planning a meal more than 12 minutes prior to cooking it. This, as it turns out, is not the important skill. What's more critical is being able to corral everyone who matters to you around a single table. You can be eating cereal or frozen pizza. It's not what you eat this is important, but instead what goes on between bites.
10. Where you come from. Okay, this one is sort of a lie. Where you came from does matter— but not nearly as much as where you are headed.

I'll be waiting for you. XXOO
Jodi Picoult (Writer)

Dear Gillian,

... One thing I learned way too late in the game for my own good was that you can effectively increase your self-esteem by doing estimable things. Therefore, I have signed you up to build homes for the homeless during your entire summer vacation. Your Christmas will be spent serving food at a battered women's shelter and Easter is designated to reading stories to children in the pediatric cancer ward. Four months out of 16 years dedicated to human beings other than yourself; you have gotten off easy. Oh and honey, expand your horizons; your world is a bigger oyster than your low self-esteem wants you to believe. Love yourself, think of others, and be grateful. I love you, I believe in you, and I look forward to respecting you.

___ Me. You. Us.
Gillian Anderson (Actress)