Telling Tales: Advice to my 20-year old self

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I read a blog recently and the 22 year old blogger requested readers write a letter offering advice to the younger you, a 20 year old you. I tried to think of how many times I've heard people, my dad in particular, say, "If only I could go back and do this (or that or the other thing) differently my life would be better." We've all said it. But most of us, if given the chance wouldn't take it. Because we know that cutting out some of the poor choices, embarrassing moments or just plain awful experiences of life would most likely mean cutting out the breathtaking, lesson learning and indescribable moments as well.

The reason the blogger made this request of readers was so that she and other 20 something's might learn more about the bumpy road us older folk had already traveled.

So just for the heck of it, here's a letter to my 20 year old self.

Dearest Becky,

Start wearing sunscreen. You'll be glad you did. When you hit 30, those cute little freckles are referred to as 'age spots.'

If the opportunity comes along to travel cross country and live on the west coast for a few months, take it. Don't think about it so much before you finally say yes. You might be a little lonely at first since you've never lived alone but trust me; you dodged a bullet by not moving in with that girl from Nevada! On your way back to Tennessee with your little sister, make a stop in the Grand Canyon and take a lot of pictures.

Stop obsessing about your weight for crying out loud! And stop buying fat free cookies. They're disgusting and you just let them go bad! You'll learn one day that the female body is capable of doing some amazing things that have absolutely nothing to do with weight or cup size.

Don't be afraid of embracing your uniqueness. Being different is one of the things that make you so uniquely you. Finding humor under the most unusual circumstances is a good quality that will serve you well.

Don't agree with someone just because you're afraid they won't like you. The right people respect you more when you give your concerns a voice.

SAVE YOUR MONEY!

Volunteer as much as possible. Not enough people your age do this.

Don't let the false teachings of a certain religion keep you from getting to know God. He's pretty cool and loves everyone no matter what they look like, how much money they have or what person they fall in love with.

Believe it or not, you're going to get married. I'm not even going to spoil the surprise. Let me just tell you this, he's closer than you think and yes, you've met him. He's a keeper. He knows you better than anyone and your abnormally large big toe doesn't bother him at all. He loves you because of- not in spite- of all your little idiosyncrasies.

Visit your mother more and don't ignore her phone calls. You may think she doesn't really have anything important to say but trust me one day you'll look back and wish you could hear her talk about how she didn't ever think you would stop sucking your thumb. You'll be glad she taught you the importance of washing down a doughnut, brownie or piece of cake with a Diet Dr. Pepper. You're more like her than you think. Where do you think you got that wicked sense of humor? Ask her more questions. She has a lot of stories to tell. Your children will want to know

all about their Nanny.

I probably shocked you with the “C” word. I know you think you don’t want children. I know you think after being raised in houseful of kids in a mildly dysfunctional home, you just want your adulthood to be quiet and clean and all about you and your job. You’ll enjoy that… for a while. But then one day, dear one, if you do find yourself wiping snotty noses, potty training, helping your son with his homework or listening to that son say his prayers at night, on that day you’ll know that just because you might not be where you thought you’d be at 35 years old, you are exactly where you were meant to be.

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