

Returning to Learning - Changing Lives

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I left my formal education at the age of 16. I had made it half way through eighth grade. Being young, I never understood the value of a basic high school education. Now, over thirty years later, I have come to realize that grade 12 is an important building block to higher learning. I am happy that I have returned to learning. Learning has improved my life in several ways, as well as helped me to reach my future goals that before were unattainable. Many times in my adult life, I had wanted to return to school to obtain my grade 12 equivalency. I was diverted by the need for money in order to help support others in my life to achieve their educational goals. As the years passed, I got involved in jobs that I could do without a grade 12 diploma. In recent years, my perspective greatly changed.

Since I was young, I had a hunger to learn new things. While my schooling was interrupted at an early age, I worked and learned skills through this process. Just before my return to the education system after thirty plus years, I was employed in a fast-paced restaurant environment. I had worked for the same company for almost ten years. I enjoyed my time working there. On the other hand, I could feel my body aging. I would often look for a job that would be physically easier, but my lack of education kept a lot of doors closed for me. Eventually, the heavy lifting took its toll on me and I had to be put off work in order to have a hernia repair surgery.

My time off from my job was a time of reflection and coming to a solid life changing decision. It was time to return to learning and obtain my long-deferred dream of graduating from high school. I could see retirement looming in my not-so-distant future and I had no plan. Time was racing on and I felt I had to grasp the chance to return to school. I knew I had the potential to unlock many new skills and I could do that in the classroom setting. The desire was there to face challenges and learning curves that I was sure to encounter.

Since I have begun my journey at the Adult Learning Center in Kingsclear, life has already changed in many positive ways. Getting up every morning to come to class is enjoyable, even though it can be challenging. Using my mind to learn new things is like opening up a huge, new world. The more I learn, the more it intrigues me to learn more. Overcoming subjects that I felt were beyond me makes me really happy. My self worth is increasing as I finally understand subjects that were hard before. Learning from positive mentors really is inspiring. The input I receive is motivational.

I will soon stand at the summit of my new and improved future. Once my grade 12 is finally obtained, I will look ahead to future goals. I am already considering the many doors now opening to me. I am considering a career in the mental health field. College will surely be part of

my future. These future goals will build toward a comfortable retirement. One of my personal goals is to improve my writing skills. I may even write my life story and have it published!

In conclusion, returning to learning has greatly changed my life. My only regret is that I had not done it sooner. My future is now much broader. Now, jobs that I desire are attainable. Also, my financial future is brighter. Returning to learning can change your mindset about learning and about life. I am glad I made this step and I recommend returning to learning to anyone who hasn't earned their high school diploma.

Teacher: [Karen Paul of the Central Valley Adult Learning Association](#)