

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”– Nelson Henderson



Dear Woman of Devotion,

I had so many reasons to be excited, I was a recent high school graduate, I was a soon to be college student, I was in love with my high school sweetheart/future husband and he was in love with me. I had no complaints, everything was moving along as planned until shortly after starting school I became pregnant, I was scared but motivated. I knew I had to tell my parents, whom by the way I was living with at the time, that was the scary part. I needed a plan when I announced my news. Surprisingly, when that day came, I was surprised, they already knew.

I earned my certification, had my first child, and graduated with the support of family. My life was forever changed. Over the next year and a half, I was married with one child and one on the way- I know, too much too soon. Remember, I was in love and he surely loved me. My husband joined the military and I found myself across the country with a small child and pregnant with no family support. He worked long hours, I had no job, no furniture, no car, and could barely survive. I couldn't take it anymore, within 6 months we moved back to our home state. Shortly after our return baby number two arrived then baby number three- I know, but I was in love. Baby number three happened within months of baby number two. With three children, I worked graveyard shifts while my husband worked during the day to avoid the cost of childcare-we could not afford it. After a while, life seemed to be getting back on track. But wait, I found myself with three children and it all happened by the age of 22. Certainly not the way I planned it.

My reality set in, I could not believe so much time had gone by so quickly. I could not believe I was a mother of three...I was so young. We were barely surviving, things had to change. My life could no longer revolve around “him”. I was determined that if I wanted things to be different then I had to do things differently. After all, it was no longer just me. Oh yeah,” my high school sweetheart/future husband”, the one that I was in love with and he surely loved me back, we separated after 5 years of marriage and eventually divorced. I was now a single mother with three young children.

Regrets-None at all. You see, if it weren't for my “yesterday”, I would not be who I am today. I've learned that every life has a lesson and the value in each lesson is that we learn. I would like to attribute my determination and strength to persevere all to me, but that's not the case. I realize now that it was only by the grace of God that I was not overtaken by my unforeseen realities. Today, I'm more disciplined and deliberate as to how I make my choices. I rely on my devotion to God for every decision concerning me. Life no longer has permission to happen to me. Life now happens for me.

My children are now adults. They are responsible, incredible, amazing people. I've encouraged them to invest in themselves through self-love and continuing their education along with believing that all things are possible. I can proudly say that I am the mother of a Mental Health Counselor, a Mechanical Engineer, and a Skilled Professional Welder.

Love,
Tinisha