

The Future of Job Corps

Dear Diary,

November 20, 2015

Remember those days as a child, when your life was so pure and you were just so full of innocence? You had no worries in the world because you always knew you'd have comfort and unconditional love from "mommy and daddy" no matter what. Yeah, I wish I could say I had that... Growing up I never really had my "mommy and daddy" to show me the way. Well I kind of did but it's not exactly the same when they aren't "yours" you know? I'm not going to lie, every day was a new struggle and everything seemed to be nothing but a joke to me as a child. Like everyone else, I was a part of this so called game we call "Life". Each day was the beginning of a new game, nobody knew what the present held or what problems we'd face today so we all kept our minds either jumbled up with "what next?" or skipped completely to the future. Or there were times where some of us didn't know how to play the game so we just pressed the "quit" button and completely gave up.

Let's be honest, I too was one of those individuals that chose to quit. Not because I didn't know how to play the game, but because I didn't want to play anymore. Like in every game, there are always chances of mistakes but there are also chances of success. It doesn't matter which one comes first or often. There is always something like a memory. It seems like just yesterday, types of thoughts that linger.

It seems like just yesterday I was daddy's little girl. Being put on his lap, having him tell me how beautiful I was and how nobody else mattered because he was my King and I was his little princess. But then again, it seems like just yesterday I had my "daddy" sneaking into my bedroom late at night... It seems like just yesterday I was screaming "ouch! Daddy stop it... You're hurting me". It seems like just yesterday I was being beaten and taken advantage of by the man I called father, it seems like just yesterday I was being put into a police car and taken away from my family, not knowing when I'll ever see them again, just yesterday I was meeting my first foster mother, just yesterday I was in and out of multiple shelters and foster homes, just yesterday I found out I was pregnant, just yesterday was the last breath my baby ever took, just yesterday I was wondering the streets looking for the next place I'd get a decent meal and a comfy bed to sleep in, just yesterday I caught myself doing heavy drugs to kill the pain, just yesterday I was sleeping with random men to feel loved and wanted. It seems like just yesterday I was locked up for trying to end my life... For trying to end this so called "game"...

For years, I've cried to the lord above and asked him "WHY". I always felt like I was being punished, but I never knew what sin I've caused that was ever so bad for me to suffer this way. I'd always ask him why he chose to make my worst nightmare become my reality. Why he wanted me to live life this way. Since then, I carried so much hatred and anger on those that's ever done me wrong, on anyone that's ever used or took advantage of me, especially on those

who ever made me feel loved and cared for then just left me like I was completely nothing. I got so used to the feeling of being alone and used that my heart became completely frozen. I just didn't want to hurt anymore. From everything I've had to face and overcome all on my own as a child to a teenager, my life began to adapt to the feeling of adrenalin from having to run away all the time because I always felt as if I was in some type of danger.

Constantly on the run, I started losing hope in myself and became very depressed. With no family or any type of support what so ever, drugs seemed like the best way to deal, so I guess you could probably figure out where that eventually led. As years went by, nothing seemed to change until one morning I found myself being arrested by two undercover after running away from my last foster home. While I spent some time sitting in a cell, everything hit me all at once... I began to break down and cry and I constantly asked myself why I put myself through this. My heart was so crushed and my mind was so broken. All I could think about was "why did it take me so long to finally stop. Stop what I was doing and fix my situation."

As time went by, I began to build my faith in god and prayed to him every night. I always asked him to lead me and support me through only the paths that he chooses for me. From that point on as I continued to pray, I finally noticed amazing doors began opening in my life which lead to great opportunities like Job Corps. At first the Job Corps program seemed too much for me, especially because everything I've been through but I've learned to make the best out of it.

Since I've entered in 2014, I must admit I did struggle a lot. There were times where I just wanted to leave and go back to what I've been doing before because all my mind knew was "RUN". But I learned the most valuable trait of this program which is setting goals. As I pushed my way through the program I caught myself making more and more goals each day because the thought of success was just so new to me, it was the most amazing feeling I've ever experienced. To me it just felt so good to be successful, even with the little things because nothing beats the feeling of being able to prove everyone that's ever doubted you wrong. My biggest goal in the program though was to obtain my High School Diploma. It was never an easy task but I learned to take initiative and persevere in order to reach my all-time goal. As far as hard work and perseverance goes, I was able to not only graduate a year before my original class but I was also given the privilege to obtain my Diploma.

I must admit, from then until now my mind is still very broken and my heart is still filled with pain but that's never stopped me from striving for what I want. I not only thank god each day for leading me into this program and helping me stand on my own two feet again, but for blessing me with something I've never really been able to grasp before, and that's a family. Although the "outsiders" may just look at this program as nothing but a "job training center" to help boost your future and give you a chance to obtain many different certifications. They'll never really see the way we all bond as one.

I am not only glad to say that this program has helped me in so many ways educationally, but it's also gave me a chance to connect with so many diverse groups, build many bonds, and most importantly be a part of a family. It's also given me a chance to witness a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget.

It seems like just yesterday I was entering Job Corps with my bags in my hand, my stomach full of butterflies, and a mind full of wonder. But look at me now! I guess you could say I have really transformed. Although I was stuck in the mud for most of my time being, it just took a little faith and hope to help make the best out of all the negative in order to help me arise from the mud and open my heart and my mind to become who I am today. As my teacher says, "A beautiful Lotus".