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### Memoir

*“He who argues for his limitations gets to keep them.” Richard Bach*

“I’m old. I’m old. I’m old. I’m old.” The words ran through my mind as each young co-ed would pass. “I hope they think I’m a teacher. I wish I would have dressed like a teacher.” My mind wouldn’t shut up as I walked onto the Salt Lake Community College campus for the first time. I was very terrified and a little lost and completely disgusted with myself for not getting my education when I was “supposed to.” Unfortunately I had learned another one of life’s difficult lessons the hard way.

I went to college when I was the “right age.” Out of high school a friend and I made the daily commute up to the University of Utah. We did it because we didn’t know what else to do. She had decided she would be a dancer and I thought wearing suits to work would be great so I chose business. We joined clubs and went to ballgames and met boys...for one year...and we liked it. Then the floods of 1984

came to Utah and my sister’s engineering firm was hiring typists to help create documents. I don’t remember now what the job paid but I remember I thought I would be rich. School could



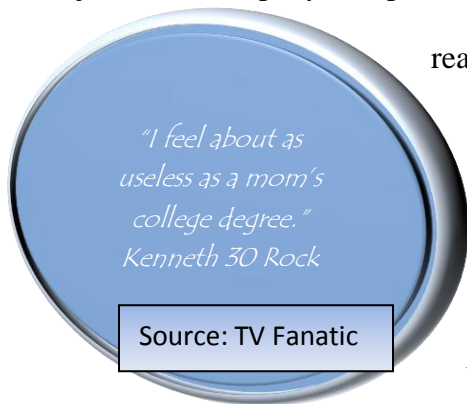
**“We have enough youth, how about a fountain of smart?”  
~Author Unknown**



Source: Quote

wait. I took the job and typed and typed and bought a car. The job transferred me to sunny California and I knew I had made it. I still typed and typed but now I was in the land of movie stars and swimming pools. Then I met a boy. Then he stopped liking me.

Broken hearted, I returned to Utah and found a great job, one I even wore suits to, and school didn't even cross my mind. Time passed and with it came a husband and three children. Life was busy and exhilarating and fun. The company offered to reimburse anyone who wanted to take college courses and I took a couple but I didn't really see the point. My co-workers and I would even joke about the *idiots* who had gotten degrees. They had all sacrificed time and money and yet here we all were making decent money...degree or not. Then one-by-one we lost our jobs. The company was purchased by a giant corporation in New York and slowly they



realized what we should have known all along, that we were fools.

Unemployed, I didn't panic. My husband had a job and I could be a PTA mom. For several years this worked.

We didn't have a lot of money but we were getting by and life was busy and fun. Here's where the lesson I needed to know when I was younger really hit me in the face. Kids grow up.

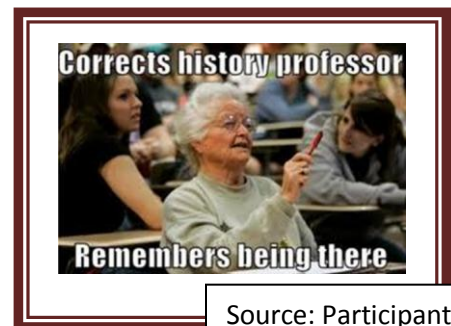
My kids were much smarter than me and understood the value of not only a degree but education in general. But this meant that they would leave and go to college. It is very difficult to be a PTA mom when you don't have kids to *PTA*. Here is the other hard part of the story. I had gotten old. Somewhere in the back of my mind I assumed I would return to the business world. I even kept my shoulder-padded suits in the closet for that moment. But, now I was old and

degree-less and my one marketable skill, typing, was so mainstream it wasn't even considered a skill anymore.

At some point I realized that the only way I would ever get a decent job again was with a degree. I decided I would go back to school. And then I talked myself out of it. I did this for five years. I paid the fee to enroll three times and backed out each time because of the prospect of the admission's test and the fact that I was just too old. I had some wisdom on my side this time but I was just plain petrified.

Two things pushed me past my fear. I saw the quote "He who argues for his limitations gets to keep them." By Richard Bach (Twitter) and it spoke to me. I never liked people who made excuses and the "I'm too old" excuse was something I had repeated a thousand times. The final push was when I saw a silly Facebook ad stating that the government would pay for anyone wanting to return to school (Press.) The money wasn't the main motivator but it was the thought that there might be other ancient souls returning to school and I wouldn't be the lone antiquated student.

So that brings me back to the first moment on the campus. I needed to face that admissions test. I hadn't taken a test in twenty-five years and I was panicked. I stumbled up the stairs and found the room. The area was small and I had definitely over-packed..purse, backpack, too many pencils, too many pens, sharpener, folders, notebooks. My heart was beating out of my chest and my mouth was dry but I tried to focus and I humbly finished the test. I cried on the way out of the building. Perhaps because of the pent up nerves that needed release or maybe because I had taken my first step as a senior student (in age not in class) or maybe because I



Source: Participant

knew how hard this was all going to be. I had definitely taken a more difficult road to my college degree.

In every class I look around and assess the ages of everyone in the room. My children inform me that that is weird and I'm the only one doing that. They are probably right. But they are young and they did things easier. My choices got me here...at this age...and so I will continue to assess the room and chant inwardly "I'm old. I'm old. I'm old." I will continue to do this right up to the point that I get my degree. Then I gotta get a job.

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