

# A letter to my freshman self

Words of advice from a senior



**By Sarah Davis**

My Dear Freshman Sarah,

At the end of your first year, a year that will expose just how frightened and uncertain you really are, you will weep during your creative writing final as your classmate reads his work about never measuring up, never meeting his family's expectations. You will weep, not because you are familiar with his experience, but because you are not. You have been well-loved, delighted in all your life, and you feel his lack keenly.

Your adviser will allow you to sit in his office as you try to tell him through your sniffing why this means so much to you. He will say that although you can learn how to care better, caring itself is not something that can be taught. That can only come from One who cares infinitely more than you do. And the honing and crafting of that deep love for the world is why you are here.

The things you love will necessarily shift in your time here. The consequences of too few hours of sleep and too few meals will teach you to better love your body –

your limited, incarnate experience. Your inability to fully parse out the meanings of the texts and ideas you study will teach you to care less about how your classmates perceive you and to love your interdependence and reliance on them for your best learning. The meltdowns that follow your stubborn perpetuation of the illusion of self-sufficiency will require your vulnerability before your roommate, wingmates and friends, your trust in their zealous goodwill for you and your acceptance of your need as sweet. Your many, discouraging realizations that you cannot be all that you want to be will allow you to be what you already are: your Father's beloved child.

So, while you are here, be curious, for attention is a form of love. Don't be afraid of the many things you do not know, but love the wealth of knowledge that exists and your own limitations in knowing it. Be exceedingly kind to yourself and to others. Be hospitable even when you don't feel fully welcome yourself. Sit, drink tea and listen long. Make a point of noticing the beauty in the faces around you and put words to it.

Hold the things and people you love loosely, remembering they are gifts from a good Father. Yet learn (and let yourself be taught) to care wildly and unabashedly for the world, both in its wideness and in the seemingly small town, faithful cornfields, and sidewalks full of good people that you will come to call home.

---

### Related Stories



Meeting neighbors within a mosque

By HOLLY GASKILL



Res Life makes changes to "Awk Walk"

By SAM JONES



Senior share

By LAUREN RINK