

To,

Me, 20 years from now.

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Dear me,

It's me. Yes, your younger version. Let me put it straight out there; I *don't* want to know anything. I don't want to know which college I have attended, which job I have bagged or how much I will earn. I think you get the point. ***I don't care, whatsoever.***

Now, you must realise that I am a teen who has certain beliefs. Right or wrong, though, I don't know. But this is what we are. This letter is a reflection of who you were at age 17. My attitude of not wanting to know about my future may or may not be a farce, but you know me best. If I do violently care about everything I just claimed I didn't, please reply.

I just want to give you a few reminders on how to live life, according to what I feel is right. If you chuckled on reading that sentence, then I suggest you burn this letter off right now and know that I will be totally ashamed of you. And that brings me to my first point.

Remember to always listen to others and learn what you can from them, ***irrespective of age.*** I hope that I have chucked away this hopeless ego of '*how can younger people be wiser than me?*'. Such an attitude never helped anyone. But, easier said than done. I still struggle with this.

I don't need advice now. All I know is that I can either be horribly wrong, or splendidly correct. Only time will reveal that. I am too young for that. I don't want to know my future because my possessions don't matter. My niceness and impact does. And telling me anything, I feel, at this point of time, will kill the magic for me. Do you go to watch a movie to see the pre-heard climax? No, you let the movie *grow* on you.

Are the values I hold consistent with me throughout? Are they even the right ones? What does a "right" value even mean? Am I just acting too stupid? Do I even *know* what I am talking about? Are these thoughts I actually *believe* in, or have they been blindly borrowed and applied from others? ***I don't know.*** But I sure hope that you have figured out what works best for us and the world around. So bear with me. Apply my first point. Don't roll your eyes because it is from a small, cringey teen who doesn't know a thing about the world. Take what you can from it, and please, don't laugh.

Let's move on.

Don't forget to do good things, and not tell people about it. Remember the first time? You cleaned all the switch boards, but no one noticed. You tried so hard to keep it in! It almost came hurtling out when mom said that you don't do anything around the house, but thankfully our brain managed to pull the reigns on our tongue. Let it be just uphill from that point onwards. But it's never too late to start. You don't have to tell anyone that you did charity, picked up our fallen flag, or that you donated for a river revival project. You did them because you should. People don't have to know.

Please uphold my decision of never buying a dog. When you have enough money to afford one, donate that money to take care of a human child. Humans first.

Continue helping people without the expectation of getting anything back. I have realised that expectations from people are never fulfilling. If you want them to help you back, they are always going to fall short of expectation. Let them decide if they deem your assistance worthy enough to reciprocate. If not, then their loss. Don't tangle yourself in this mess. Live happily with the fact that you did what was right.

Don't die for money. Invest in mutual funds, and forget about it. Don't check them every day. No *bearish-bullish* bullshit. Money should always remain just as a means to get through life comfortably, and not an end and goal. I know, typical cliché. But they exist for a reason.

End up at bed totally exhausted, just like you did while you were preparing for the JEE. Remember the sound sleep you had after that? Why would you want to stop experiencing something like that?

And, finally. Are you happy? If you are, then that's all that's required. Rich or not, handsome or not, popular or not, what matters is that your time on the Earth is a splendid one. Remember, this life is **totally** yours. No one is going to feel bad if you don't have fun and die with unsurmountable levels of stress. No one is the loser if you have not done the things you always wanted to. **You** will be crowned the loser. Nobody cares about you, so why do you care about others? Or what your image in their brain is? I know that I haven't been able to inculcate this exactly into my life at this moment on time, but you know that I am working towards that. This letter was always meant to be a reminder in case we have lost our way.

I seem to realise that you can really enjoy life only after it has a nice serving of responsibilities along with the fun moments. Chilling out without having worked leads you to an empty experience. And those are all we have, right? Experiences! So do you want them to be empty, or full of energy and happiness? Go figure.

Do everything you ever wanted to do. You won't gain anything with your stupendous 'sacrifice'. In the 40 odd years you have left, why are you so hell bent on doing stuff so seriously? Chill out, and start taking the world and yourself lightly.

Reply only if I have gotten everything horribly wrong.

Yours lovingly,

Sanket - presently 17.
