

AnnaMarie Drake

Better late than never



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“Better Late Than Never” is my new motto in life. This new way of looking at life has become my attitude since I decided to return to school three years ago. It was a decision I’ll never regret and its benefits sure outweigh its hardships.

Not having my grade 12 bothered me throughout my life, it was embarrassing at times. I had the feeling people looked at you differently when they knew that you didn’t finish high school. I was one of the lucky ones though, I had managed to get a good job despite my lack of education. I trained on the job as a Dental Assistant, and later took a correspondence course to get my diploma. Even though I was very competent at my job, working at it for almost twenty years, not having my grade 12 still hung over me like a dark cloud. I wondered what the patients would think if they knew.

Returning to school never crossed by mind until the opportunity presented itself three years ago. The learning center located in our local high school was offering an adult education program. This program had a lot of great things going for it, you could attend day or evenings, it was free of charge, if you were drawing employment insurance it didn’t affect it, there was no pressure - you went at your own speed, and most of all they had an excellent staff. With all these pluses, the decision to return was easy.

It wasn’t always easy balancing work, a home, three kids, a husband, and finding time to study. More often than not the study time came last on the list, but I had waited this long, so so what if it takes me a little longer. There were times when I questioned myself, why am I bothering to do this, I am getting along fine without it, but when I’d get a good mark on a test or catch on how to do a math problem, my question was answered, I’d feel great! This has been a learning experience for my whole family. They have learned to give me the space I need, when I need it. They have all had a hand in helping me with one thing or another throughout my studies, and I think they enjoyed the role reversal. Hopefully my kids have learned to try and do well in school, now, while they are there. When they see so many adults returning they’ll realize how important it really is.

Returning to school was also an enjoyable experience. It is quite a different story from when you are there because you want to be and not because you have to. I thoroughly enjoyed my courses and learned a lot from them. Some of them have actually opened up new doors of interest for me.

Now that I am finished and graduation is upon me this week, I can’t begin to explain the way I feel. Excited, grateful, emotional, confident all rolled up into one. It’s just an amazing feeling, and I never expected it. I would recommend returning to school to anyone, at any age. Remember “better late than never”.

**Proud to be a Graduate
AnnaMarie Drake**