

Advice I Would Give To My Younger Self

By Bobby Bostic

As I sit back and meditate on the many mistakes that I have made in life, I contemplate on the advice that I would give to my younger self. Then again, I wonder would he listen? My 14, 15, or 16 year old self thought he had it all figured out. He rebelled against adults, because in his young mind they didn't know what they were talking about. How could they, since they couldn't see the world through his eyes. Ironically, now that I am older I see things differently.

When we are young we somehow put it in our minds that we will be young forever. How could we ever imagine that we would become those same adults that we rebelled against as we try to give positive advice to our own kids? I never lost touch with my youth; therefore I understand where that rebellion comes from. Yet my thinking has changed.

At 14, 15, and 16 years old I saw the world in the way that I wanted to see it. Back then it was only about what I wanted. That included girls, the latest fashions, cars, gangbanging and money. I didn't have a clue about the future, nor did I even care. Why? Because I never thought I would live to be 18 years old. All around me, my peers were getting killed, so it was just a matter of time before I would be next.

My mind was so closed back then. What was I thinking? The problem is that I wasn't thinking. Foolishly, without any rational basis I thought I knew it all. I would make dumb mistake after mistake everyday and not really give it a second thought. In my mind, my parents and other nosy adults did not know what they were talking about when they tried to give me positive advice regarding the decisions that I should be making in life. How could they understand me when they had not experienced what I have been through? Besides, this is not the 1970's or 1980's anymore.

Yeah, that little hardheaded fool that I was thought he had it all figured out. So what advice would I give him today? First I would have to put myself in his shoes so I could relate to his thinking. Now I realize that his thinking was distorted. Ground zero would be that he should listen to his mother. That is common sense; but when you are in your teenage rebellion it is not so logical. After all this time I have learned that it was my mother who was there to rescue me every time that I got into trouble. She was the one who cried because I wouldn't listen to her. I would do the very thing that she would warn me not to do. When my rebellion landed me in serious trouble she never gloated over my misfortune. On the contrary she was in pain with me as well as for me. When I rebelled against her advice and landed in trouble she never once said: "I told you so". Instead she was there every time I needed her, unlike my peers.

As a rebellious teenager it was always those same adults who tried to help me when I failed. I would tell my younger self to listen to my mother first of all. She loves you more than anyone else in this world. I would tell my teenage self to "slow down". I would let him know that every decision that you make today will affect your quality of life tomorrow. Once these decisions are made you cannot change them; therefore you must give serious thought to what you are doing. The world doesn't owe you anything.

Don't spend all your time playing because this will cause you to have to work harder in the long run. Look at the bigger picture and don't just see what is right in front of you. Education doesn't seem all that important to you right now but it is the foundation stone of everything that you are after. This is the basics of life; you cannot skip over the basics to get into the luxuries of life. When you make mistakes, take timeout to evaluate how and why you made this mistake. Catch it before it becomes too big and irreversible. When someone asked you why you made that mistake, you often say: "I was not thinking". Well younger self, you need to start thinking.

I would again tell my younger self to take responsibility for what you do and stop blaming people for your blunders. I would ask my younger self where do you want to be 5 years from now? What steps are you taking to get there? You have to have a plan, and work that plan. As the old saying goes: "if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail". I know that you do not want to fail in life. You want to be successful. Crime is not the way to do that. First you have to learn what real success is. Right now your definition of success is distorted.

Study the greats in history that came before you and see how they found success from the ground up. Look to positive inspirational mentors. Even if your reality is hard, look to the future to see how it can one day become better. Work towards that. Do not try to escape reality through drugs and alcohol. Find creative ways to deal with your pain, anger and frustration. If you are misunderstood do not feel alienated. Just be who you are and accept yourself for who you are even if others don't. Face reality no matter how difficult it is. Try to change it. You are not helpless to make change in the world. You are not powerless. Do not just see what is wrong with the world and complain about it. See what you can try to do along with others to make the world a better place. Do not be selfish, it is always bigger than just you. Stay grounded and humble. If you do not like the bully, then never become like that person. Do not make your choices strictly from peer pressure. The advice I would keep on giving to younger self is endless, but basically this sums it up. If you are a young teenager, please listen to me. My life is real. What happened to me at 16 years old is real. Read my story and make better decisions than I did.