

Moral Persuader

Greetings! It's been such a long time. So let's catch up. Well I'm almost done with my second graduate class at Green Mountain College in Vermont. Love the program, Master of Science in Sustainable Food Systems. It challenges every inch of my brains capacity. I finally feel like I'm able to take my passions to the next level. What a relief that is, after much ado and frustration trying to get others to understand the magnitude of where I was coming from. I realized it wasn't necessary to be in a program that was no where near the caliber level that I wanted to be at as convenient as it was to get accepted and local. My heart wasn't ever really attached to the school where I got my undergrad degree from simply because it was after so many years of efforts at several colleges that I didn't contribute my success to that one school but all the others. I had an upwards of about 185 college credit hours which also included coursework in a variety of fields. I started out at Columbia College and ended up at Green Mountain.

Boy how I wish that I was one of those people who say who they are going to become, xyq, and just be it. But clearly God has had other plans for me, my entire life. It has been far from an easy one. At some point I hope to sit down long enough to finish writing what I think will be a pretty interesting autobiography because of some of my struggles. There's bits and pieces that were fleeting humiliation and a time or two I nearly died. The closest I've come to finishing my book is writing another song. But getting to this point of who I've become makes me realize how influential my earliest role models were. They became my life force and have

defined my complete being. If it wasn't for my great grandmother Kit Henderson, my mother Teresa's mother Gloria's mother, who knows where I'd be? Digging my hands in the dirt as much as ever before? I take great pride in what G'ma Kit taught me. Her first lesson was the moral persuader.

The Ping Pong Paddle: aka Moral Persuader. I am extremely grateful now for getting swat on the behind, many times in my younger years. I gotta tell ya, the ping pong paddle swat on a childhood bare toosh, was far from fun at the time. It plum down right hurt! My mother, fortunately for me, carried on her tradition which started when I spent time with her while my mother finished her education at Hillsdale College. Discipline is necessary though. Without it, or without the "moral persuader," one may have no moral compass, not know right from wrong, and how is one to live independently when they don't know right from wrong. How can one make friends when they don't know what's wrong or right? I was also grounded when I was, "out of line," which was usually due to running my mouth. Go figure right? Humility is a necessary part of growth too. I learned the hardest lessons from mortification. Those stories are definitely for the books. Perhaps the rawness of reality will hit home for some people. I'm still embarrassed about them. They will be shared. I know, secrets we humans have. They actually become pretty interesting. I suppose they tell our life. What things may or may not define us.

Memories with Gma Kit include building towers with multicolored and multi shaped recycled cardboard blocks, cracking nuts from one of her many whole grain jars on her island of health benefits. She cranked her own applesauce, fed me dandelion heads and greens,

taught me how to garden in every season, compost with her giant compost tumbler, eat whole grains, and I'm sorry, brewer's yeast-still not a fan but will occasionally add to a smoothie I make. It's a good protein boost. I'll give her that. But it tastes awful and my Aunt Lisa adds it to her Dr. Pepper, I can't even imagine. Mom, and Grandma Glo, it does not taste good. I can't remember if Aunt Kelly likes it? Still. And I've come to love olives, dark chocolate, and blue cheese over the years, but Brewer's Yeast, don't think I'll ever be a fan of the taste. Yak!

My mom insists that she made me a part of her Vermiculture farm in the basement of which I don't recall. I recall a basement. That's all I remember on that memory but love to add that to my Gma Kit's accomplishment list. Especially since having a Vermiculture Farm is on mine! This past year we ordered worms for the first time online to add to all of our garden beds. We ordered 500 red worms from Uncle Jim's Vermiculture Farm.

For today, when I'm not feeling quite in the holiday spirit and I'm missing my husband far away. I feel grateful for what my Great Grandmother taught me. Maybe her earliest lessons were the lessons that I should have listened to all a long. Who moves you in your life? Who has transformed your life? What have they done to make living life extraordinarily different? How can you be more like them? Gma Kit was pretty simple. She didn't sugar coat anything, she said it like it was. I suppose in that way I'm like her too. But that's kind of our family tradition, to speak our mind so loud until it hurts. I wish our family wasn't like that but it is. Sometimes we step on each others toes and don't realize how bad our feet are aching until we notice

we're actually crying. Sometimes we need a swift whack of the "moral persuader," to remind us that what we said, or what we did, "just ain't right." Sometimes, we need to APOLOGIZE. Especially to our own family. That doesn't happen a lot of the time. It makes me very sad. We are so resilient, so proud, so strong, so confident, so independent, so gifted, so fun, and yet so blind.

I don't ever remember dreading holidays as much as I did this past season. Thanksgiving and Christmas have always been my favorite, because of the time that I've spent with family. But sometimes we need a break. Perhaps as I get older I'm less tolerant of all the induced stress that time with our family brings. I just want to spend it nestled up with my husband, reading the bible passages that my grandma Cora would read to me every Christmas that I shared with her too. This Christmas I'm thankful for my grandparents who have shaped, molded, changed my life and influenced my future. Especially my Great Grandma Kit, Grandma Cora, and Grandpa Doc. My Grandpa Rex, and Grandma Glo have been influential too. Thank you for all that you have shown me, and I'm so blessed and lucky to still have you in my life! I cherish every day that you are still a part of Earth and every day that I shared with you in every memory.

Let us not worry about all of the unimportant things that do not really matter. Let us be blessed, thankful, and joyous about the time and love that our friends and family share. Let us forgive one another for overstepping boundaries, imposing who we are so much that we forget that we are to love the other unconditionally, support them in all they do, and know that what they do is for their own choosing. That is what makes them who they are. That is what makes me who

I am.

In living life more simply;

Less is more.

Live and Let live!

Live and Forgive!

Live and Apologize!

Love and Love Often!

Laugh and be True!

Shine and be You!

Find your Joy!

Now.