

2016 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize]

**Letter to My Younger Self**  
(Original)

*Alina Lascu*

*(Age 14, Romania)*

*Colegiul National "Mircea cel Batran", Constanta*

*Dear little me,*

I know this world is rough. I know it's not as you thought it was. I know it's hard to understand. You know, this happens to everyone. When you reach your teen years, you start to realize that nothing is as pink as you thought it was. People are constantly trying to show off their power, and they have been fighting for so long they even forgot what they were fighting for; it became their way of living.

But, little girl, you must realize that you're one of the lucky ones! You can find someone to answer all of your questions. It would be a pity to waste all these things you are offered; these things that seem normal to you, but are a dream for too many other people: a home, a family, a chance to education.

Oh, darling, have you ever wondered how this world would be if everyone was as lucky as you are? Maybe we wouldn't fight anymore. Maybe we would have evolved enough, as humans, to realize that we need to stand together as one to find change. This is what education is for: to help us understand what it takes to live peacefully, to communicate, to grow.

But it's never too late! You can't go on pretending everyday that someone somewhere will soon make a change; but you can be that 'someone'. It all starts from the inside.

Firstly, you need to educate yourself. Use your imagination, read as much as you can, ask questions and never be afraid to try to do more than you are asked to in school. Don't fear failure and always challenge yourself; in this way, you will be able to grow and evolve and eventually reach the stars.

That's what school should do: train your mind, make you think and help you understand. Challenge you to find the answer yourself when it's not given to you. Because, at the end of the day, it's about wisdom, not only knowledge. And, most of all, it's about accepting you and those around you as they are; it's about teamwork, communication and understanding one another.

Of course, the process of education lasts a lifetime. But, one day, sooner than you're expecting, you'll feel that you've had enough to start sharing it with the world. Communicate. Share. Never be afraid to tell the world what you think, how you feel. This is, again, a great thing: to be able to speak your mind and share your soul with the world, to do this peacefully and without hurting anyone. That is what shows you're an educated individual. This is what everyone should be taught to do. Because it seems to be a little thing, a common one; but if it were like that, we wouldn't live the way we do now.

All of us get education, when you really think about it. The lucky ones - like you - are granted the opportunity to go to school. But it's not only the school which shapes us as humans. You see, honey, it all comes from the surroundings you grow up in. The people you see around you as a little kid, the things they do, they say: everything gets stuck in your mind, even though you don't realize it. People tend to imitate what they see around them. That is why this world is so cruel.

I know it's hard to believe, but you - yes, you! - can change that. It can all start from you. If you start helping others, people will take you as a model. They will spread the help and kindness everywhere. It's a process of learning and, gradually, the whole world will become better. That's what education means.

And, lastly, little self, always remember that you got to choose the way you're going to rule your life. It's *your* choice. So take advantage of all these things that are offered to you and start growing. Educate yourself! Begin to build a better world for you and those around you.

Because if you do so, this huge world will be yours, little girl - if it isn't already.

*Love,  
your future self*