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Reaching your Dreams by Choosing Optimism

With willpower, love, and optimism, I will carry out my dream of fostering children in need. I come from a family familiar with the broken but necessary foster care system, considering three of my siblings were adopted. As a result of some heart wrenching events, I can say with confidence my three sisters would either be dead or in prison if the foster care system had not played a role in their lives.

Many of my peers struggle to understand the concept of a child that has different DNA living in my home, but after speaking with my sisters, who bore witness to hard drug use, physical and mental abuse, extreme filth, and even the murder of a loved one, I cannot grasp why anyone eligible would opt out of helping voiceless children. The life of a child can forever be changed by someone who takes them in and shows them love and stability. Sandi Schwartz, a freelance writer and science analyst states, “children who do not have affectionate parents tend to have lower self-esteem and to feel more alienated, hostile, aggressive, and antisocial (Schwartz, 2017).” Foster parents have a unique responsibility to provide what is missing and ensure a child without present biological parents is not already set on a path bound for failure because of events they can’t control. Foster parents must provide extra, unconditional love because of its lasting effects on brain development. The foster parents must stay determined, affectionate, and optimistic, so the current and future attitude of the child is not jeopardized.

My goal is to provide a safe, structured, home with a foundation of accountability. I want the children I foster to ALWAYS have a deep sense of safety, particularly because most kids will

come from such a dysfunctional household, they are fearful of everything. If children feel secure, they are more inclined to be expressive and allow for personal growth. A lot of children that are tossed into the system, especially at an immature age, have never experienced a structured environment. A solid foundation is imperative for child development because without a strong core, any life skills that are taught will go down the drain very quickly. Lastly, accountability is paramount for encouraging positive character traits and teaching a child to be a functioning and contributing member of society. It is my greatest hope that I can show children through personal example and loving guidance that Having integrity, performing one's due diligence, and understanding right from wrong, then acting on It when the time comes, will lead them to a better and happier life than the one they came from.

Adolescents are very impressionable, therefore the concept of building for the future by reflecting on the past will enhance healing for emotional wounds, while also instilling an optimistic outlook. The following report dives into mental health, creativity, and optimism correlations, then states, "...optimists to take initiative, persist in the face of adversity, take risks and use effective problem-solving strategies, and be more assertive than pessimistic individuals (Le, 2015)." Optimism will not only benefit the child throughout their future, but also their foster parent. If there is a drive to improve the quality of life for one another and work together as a team, growth in attitude is bound to not only occur, but flourish. Changes in a person's mentality can add motivation, reduce stress, and let a glimmer of hope shine through that the future can be better than the past.

Currently, I am only a senior in high school, so this dream has to be on the back burner for now. To even start the process of fostering kids, I need to have a career in place and be able to support myself before I take on the task of supporting another person. My goal is to obtain a

degree in business management then after graduation, own and operate my own small business surrounding property management. Being an entrepreneur is a risky pathway, but can also result in plentiful success if I am willing to put in the time and effort necessary. I want my success in life to serve as an example to children that ANYONE, especially them, can reach their dream with enough determination no matter their circumstances.

In conclusion, staying optimistic and determined throughout college, my small business, then fostering children, I will succeed in changing the stigma that follows foster care. All it takes is one great family for others to change their perception of people and to light a fire inside them to spread optimism everywhere they go.

Works Cited

Le, D. H. (2015). *Examining the Relationship between Mental Health, Creative Thought, and Optimism*. Korean Association for Thinking Development.

Schwartz, S. (2017). How a Parent's Affection Shapes a Child's Happiness for Life. *Motherly*.