

Advice to Myself (if I could begin again...)

Posted on [June 13, 2015](#) by [cindyricksgers](#)
[Standard](#)



No doubt about it, I love a good “do-over.”

My battle cry, as a child, when a game of pretend went off in a crazy direction that I didn’t like was, “Starting over...” Calling it out was like crying “dibs” or being first to claim the window seat: to maintain order, it had to be respected. Sometimes we’d “start over” a dozen times before it seemed right.

I wish I had that option in real life. Too often, I’ve taken an extreme position, let an opportunity go by or did something really stupid...out of a temporary sense of daring, a moment of “throwing caution to the wind,” foolishness, anger, sadness, or just not thinking things through.

I don't want to start all the way over in life, but there are certainly things I wish I could re-do. *If I could, and if I could offer a few suggestions beforehand (this is assuming I would listen...), some of these pointers might come in handy.*

- Don't be so stubborn. It's okay to change your mind, to change your pattern of behavior, to change your entire life direction if you want to. You do not have to follow every decision to its end; you do not have to uphold every rule. It is okay to just relax and let it go sometimes.
- Perennial flower beds are not always the best way to go. Perennials *sound* like a good way to have a permanent, established and carefree garden. You don't have to buy plants and put them in the ground each spring. *However...* when weeds move in, which they undoubtedly will, perennial beds are extremely hard to manage. If birds drop seeds, if neighboring trees drop seeds...or if your neighbor gets tired of looking at your lawn with grasses so tall they have gone to seed, and comes over with his own lawn mower to do the job you have neglected, *but doesn't think to aim the discharge away from the flower beds and fills them all with millions of grass and weed seeds*, perennial beds present problems. The roots of weeds can get tangled around day lily corms or iris tubers, and hold on tight. Grasses growing among the foliage of poppies are almost impossible to ferret out. Maybe, just maybe, wouldn't it be nice to be able to churn up the soil in those beds each spring, get rid of every single weed, fertilize, and plant annuals, fresh and bright?
- Avoid situations where your voice is recorded. Stay out of photographs. When you cannot avoid having your picture taken, avoid at all costs that wide, open-mouth laughing face that makes your mouth look like a big, gaping hole. Do not lift your chin for pictures, like a child trying to be taller. Do not lower your chin to the point that you show a double-chin. Keep your arms close to your sides! When you allow your arms to go akimbo, elbows out, you emphasize everything that is already too obviously wrong with your stature and your posture. If possible, just take a cue from your father, and avoid photographs altogether. Finally, avoid any situation where you might be caught on videotape. If you find yourself in a situation...like a township meeting, for instance...where filming is going on, do *not*, for heaven's sake, sit anywhere near the person wielding the camera!
- *Whenever* you get the urge to employ a stern directive, wittily handled, know that *you* are the only one that will think it is cute. Others will see it as bossy, condescending, rude or worse. You will hurt feelings, or offend. Long after words have been exchanged and apologies have been spoken, you'll still be waking up in the middle of the night, cringing at things that cannot be taken back. You *know* that your biggest regrets in this life involve things that you said, out loud or in letters, responding to anger or frustration or rallying for a cause, without thinking it through. It might be wise, as a good rule-of-thumb, to *just keep your mouth shut!*
- Never, never, never move into a house that is not completely finished...because once you've moved in, chances are it never will be.
- If you ever again find yourself at one hundred pounds, with a full, thick head of hair and long, black eyelashes, don't you dare be critical!
- You could probably get by with a lot less books.

- Say “I love you,” often, and with feeling, whenever you feel it. Do not hold back. Opportunities go by, never to come again. Let people know that they matter.

There’s probably more...but this is a good start. If I’d only had this advice...and followed it...always, in my life so far, how much better I would feel today! If only there were do-overs!