

As hard as it is to believe, my senior class would be celebrating their forty-year high school reunion this year. I haven't heard about any reunion plans, so I'm thinking it is not happening. But then again, I am in touch with only one dear friend, Mara (our senior pictures are shown below), from those days. I was supposed to be with her and her family in California this weekend, but life turns on a dime, doesn't it? My now ex-husband of 31 years, as of May 21, 2021, decided I didn't need this time away, and brought our grandsons back to me a week earlier than planned. And so it goes...

I don't have much in common with the friends that I was still in touch with just ten years ago, at our thirty-year reunion. My political and religious views have basically taken me out of the circle, so to speak. We have all finally outgrown each other, I suppose.

Isn't it funny how such a short period of time leaves a huge footprint in our lives? Unlike generations before us, social media makes it possible to reunite with those we would have otherwise strained to remember their names and faces.

Ten years ago, it was exciting to reconnect with those old friends via Facebook, as we anticipated the actual face to face gathering. I think we were all past trying to impress each other with where we were in life and were just grateful to see those familiar faces. It was good to see everyone, but I confess the reunion was almost anticlimactic. At least it was for me.

I held on to treasured memories of these people for so long. I always assumed they did too. When it came to seeing each other, most conversations turned into the standard banter, "How are you? How have you been? What are you doing? How many kids do you have?" I was hoping we could have all ended up sitting on the floor, exchanging old stories that led to pubescent laughter and possibly a little reminiscent crying. It is never a good idea to build up events in your mind. Reality is never as good as picturing the possibilities.

To my delight, however, my high school crush did turn up at the reunion, and I confess I was still smitten with him as I stood there next to my husband. I was back in high school again as he put his arm around me to take a photograph and surprised me with a kiss on my forehead. Of course, I would have never said or done anything about making my feelings known, but I left that reunion with a heavy heart.

God made a strange creature when he made me. He has created me to love way too deeply. I had a childhood 'best friend' named Pam. We were inseparable in the third grade and managed to stay in touch well into our young adult years. The reality of it all, however, was I think our staying connected was mainly due to efforts from my side. I imagined she and I would stay best friends until we were old and gray, sitting together on a front porch in our rocking chairs, talking about the good ole days. About fifteen years ago, I think I finally saw it all for what it really was, that she was my best friend, but I was never hers. That really stung.

Just as with my childhood friend, my high school crush is still in my heart. From the day we were in an Oceanography class together, and he was trying to slide my paper to me, but the air conditioning kept picking the paper up and blowing it back to him. As we laughed about it, my heart was gone. I was never the same. When fundraising time came around to buy candy canes or flowers to send to whomever you choose, I would always buy some for him. With help from my friends, I removed a street sign with his name on it and left it on his front doorstep with a bow on it. I loved him deeply, but the feelings were not returned.

I had a chance to reconnect with him not long after the reunion, and not long after my best friend from high school passed away. It was a shock to lose her, and he was so kind, knowing the friendship she and I shared during our high school years. What he intended as genuine support and concern I saw as a possibility. I was still completely beguiled. Like a fool, I told him so, and I do so wish I could take it all back. I was right on the verge of my 'breakdown' in 2014, and I spilled. And I am so, so sorry.

Never mind the fact that I had barely sat and talked with him for any length of time. When we were in school together, my brother's best friend was considered the 'go-to' guy when someone wanted to buy weed, so I reaped the benefits of that relationship, frequently. My crush was completely the opposite. He played soccer, his girlfriend was a cheerleader, and I doubt if he even drank in high school. A typical, yet pitiful high school movie script if there ever was one.

Something he told me shattered me. Apparently, my 'good' friends back then had left a note on his car, telling him that I wanted to have sex with him. Thirty-plus years later, I was devastated to think he had been told that, and worse, possibly believed that about me all these years. Yes, I was a party-girl, but only because my life was so unbearable that I would drink, and smoke weed to forget how unhappy I truly was. The fact is, I was a virgin well beyond high school. Perhaps to others, they saw me as someone who might sleep around. In truth, I was a sad and lonely young lady, who loved someone so severely, that I still have feelings for him today.

Here I am, forty years later, and I still see those faces and I hear those voices. I remember the halls of the high school like it was yesterday. I do not miss them. In fact, you could not pay me enough to relive those years again. They were some of my darkest and saddest years, to be sure. But I suppose those years shape us in a way, don't they? Many don't change much after high school. You can still see the cliques at work. You can find the nerds off in a corner or the jocks huddling around to talk about the big game on tv.

Perhaps high school is a necessary rite of passage that we all must endure. I'm sure for many, it may have been the best years of your life. I hope not. That would be a sad reality for me. I am so happy for the moms and dads I know who have graduates this year. I have two sweet and beautiful cousins who are graduating, and I wish them bright and fulfilling lives as they venture out into the world.

I guess I have shared all of this to say that the time we spend in school is just a season. Do not let these years define who you are, as I believe I did for an exceedingly long time. I mentioned that God created me to feel things and love people way too deeply. I admit, sometimes it is hard to be me for that reason. But in doing this, I believe I can empathize with others on a much deeper level. I can often see what a child is feeling, simply because I have been where they are. I can only pray that I will be granted wisdom on how I use this insight.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2021. I wish for you all of God's greatest blessings in the adventures before you, and I pray that you will always seek Him first in all you do.

To the Class of 81, God bless you, wherever you are. LB, I still love you and I always will. Please forgive me for my childish ways.

Blessings,

Lisa Jo



Class of **1981**

California High School
Please join your fellow Grizzlies for our
30th Year Reunion!
Saturday, June 18, 2011
6:30 - 11:30 pm
Appetizers & No Host Bar
Pineammon Hilton Hotel in The Club
\$40.00 per person

Picnic
Casual BBQ to finish catching up
Sunday, June 19th
12 noon - all we finish!
San Ramon Central Park
\$10.00 per person or \$25 per family

Resps by May 15th
Questions? Contact VirginiaTucker@pioneer.net
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