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Are You Too Old To Go Back To School?

By Deanna Mascle

You want to go back to school and continue your education. Perhaps you'd like to earn your first degree or ou'd like to earn a new degree in a different field. You've been dreaming of that degree but haven't dared believe your dream can come true because you think you are too old.

You aren't. It really is that simple. I don't care what your age is, as an experienced college-level educator I can assure you that you are not too old, because there are many nontraditional students on college campuses today (and likely some of those are older than you are), your life experience gives you many advantages over more traditional students, and with the growing nontraditional population many colleges have programs and services especially tailored for the nontraditional student.

I went back to school in my 30s and today I teach college. Yes, I have many traditional students in my classroom but every semester I have a large percentage of nontraditional students as well. I have studens in their late 20s as well as 30s, 40s, 50s, and up. I have students who have retired from one career and are looking to move into another. I have students whose children (or grandchildren) have left the nest so they are looking to enter a new stage in their life.

I also have many students balancing school with work and family. I have students who are the traditional age but are in nontraditional circumstances including children and family, work and military service, as well as sports and other activities. You are a unique person, but your situation is not as unique as you might think.

In many ways, your age, or rather your life experience, will be a tremendous asset for your return to school. Nontraditional students understand much better than traditional students how to manage their time and prioritize tasks. In addition, nontraditional students are often much more motivated and goal-oriented than their more traditional counterparts. Finally, your life experience also gives you a great deal of knowledge and experience to fall back on or pull from when it comes to understanding, applying, or adapting the new knowledge you gain through college. I regularly see my nontraditional students outperform traditional students in many ways, but it ultimately comes down to a maturity of thinking and reasoning that can only come with growing up. I know when I returned to college as a student after working for a number of years that I did much better in the classroom and also handled

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my work load much better than I did when I was a more traditional student.

Today colleges recognize they have a changing student population and offer classes in a variety of formats including on campus, off campus, televised, and internet as well as a range of schedules including days, nights, weekends, and accelerated. In addition, there are now support services available for students who fall outside the traditional student role. Many financial aid and scholarship programs also exist specifically for the nontraditional student.

In the end, it really comes down to your own gut feeling. Do you really want that degree? Are you ready to change your life? You can do it and there will be help and support available for you. Don't use your age as an excuse not to pursue your dream.

Deanna Mascle has spent decades as an educator. You can read more about adult education at

<http://answersabouteducation.com>

and

<http://adultslearnmore.com>

A New School Year

By Kimberly Chastain

Depending on where you live school will be starting this month or next month. A new school year is usually exciting and scary at the same time. Most children won't admit it, but they are ready to get back to school and see their friends. As much as I love not having a rigid schedule in the summer, I do miss the structure of the school year. We get up later in the summer and go to bed later as well.

When you think of a new School Year what are your first thoughts? Back to school shopping for clothes and school supplies. A big transition from elementary to middle school, or to high school, even college. A new teacher who you heard is strict or not strict enough? There can often be lots of anxiety with a new school year for parents as well as children.

Can I offer a few suggestions for your back to school list? Remember whose children they are. Yes they are our children, but they are God's children. He cares about them and loves them more than we ever could. Pray for your children. Pray for their academics, choice of friends, study habits, and wisdom to make Godly choices. Pray for their teachers. If their teachers are not Christians, pray that God can use you to be an example to their teachers. Pray for the administrators in your child's school. Pray for the safety of your child and all the children at their school. Pray that your children will see a Godly example in you, with how you handle school difficulties or problems with your children. Begin praying with other mothers for their children as well. We don't have to carry the burden alone. Above all remember God is in control. I often have a difficult time remembering that principle.

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In closing, God is a mighty God and he cares about our concerns. I often pray on the way to taking my children to school. I pray when my children are having difficulties with friends. God cares about everything in our lives and He truly cares about our children. My mother is a prayer warrior for my children and myself. May we all become prayer warriors for our children. Take your problems to Him and leave them there.

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Kimberly M. Chastain, MS, LMFT is the Christian Working Mom Coach and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in helping Christian women make the most of their lives. She is the author of the on-line course, "I Can't Say No" and Pearls of Encouragement for Christian Working Moms, a free e-book. If you suffer from "I Can't Say `No" Syndrome, visit Kimberly's site today for the details on an exciting email course that's sure to set you free!

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