



Teachers, Keep Going

By Educator Barnes - March 19, 2019

Last week was a rough week. I expressed to my husband how weighed down I was feeling with all that was happening in our lives. I mentioned how I love being a library/media specialist but feel out of place at my school. My husband suggested I should think about doing something else. If you know my husband, doing something else means be a stay at home wife. He supports me being an independent working woman but strongly thinks I should just write.

Only once before did I feel like I wasn't a good fit at a school. The students like me so that's a positive; it keeps me going each day. Every principal I ever had will tell you that fostering strong relationships with students is my specialty. I just make it happen. I have students who get to come to the library/media center who have not been able to go to special area classes. I truly believe I can reach every student even though some of my educator friends have told me I'm drifting in the clouds with that idea.

Should I really just throw in the towel at the end of the school year and write as my husband suggested? This is the question that was rolling around in my head as my husband, sons, and I watched *Star Wars* on television on Sunday evening. During the commercial break, I saw an email notification come across my phone. In the subject was the name of a school where I was previously employed. I opened the email. Below, with permission, I share an excerpt of what I read.

Dear Mrs. Barnes,

I have stumbled upon the note you wrote to me after I finished my 8th-grade year of middle school. It almost brought me to tears reading that note. I remember the goofball I used to be.

I am currently in my second semester of my senior year. I'm at a 3.8 GPA and in your note, you left this email address. Mrs. Barnes, I never got to tell you thanks. School brought out a lot of my flaws and as a future Hoosier or Boilermaker, I feel like I can say I have fixed many of my flaws. I hope you are doing well. I'm not a perfect kid but who is?

Mrs. Barnes, reading your note has reminded me of the journey I have been through. If only you could've seen out of my eyes the first 18 years of my life, you'd think the same. I never told you your impact on a frail foolish kid like me but I realize now your impact was one that will stick with me for the rest of my life- "Keep going."

And just when I had started to think about walking away, I get a message to remind me why I do this work and why I should not walk away. If the message wasn't clear, I received another email that night. It was from a teacher I helped when I was a literacy coach. The teacher informed me how she put to use the advice I gave her and how it changed her trajectory.

Third quarter is that crazy time of the year when teachers, including me, start hitting walls. We question whether we are a good fit, whether we are good educators, whether we should keep

getting up each and every day to teach students. Teaching is a calling, and I believe I have been called to teach. I'm going to listen to the advice I gave my former student and "keep going." If you are an educator reading this, use spring break to rejuvenate and keep going too.