



## A message to my younger self

**John Magee**

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Hi John,

Where to start? What a journey it's been so far. There are some things I've learnt that I think you will find helpful along the way.

First and foremost – try to STOP WORRYING so much and believe in yourself a bit more. You are going to go on and do plenty of things that you never thought you'd be able to do – and you will do them well - mostly! You will move away from your hometown and your career will take you to lots of different places – you will find some of them more enjoyable than others, but you'll be absolutely fine, and you will meet and work with some exceptional people. (You will also meet and work with some people who are less exceptional, but you will learn things from them too). Some things seem like an enormously big deal at the time they are happening, but years or even months down the line you won't be able to remember what you were so concerned about.

Next up – during the times you find yourself deputising for somebody else and you have a big decision to make – always go with what you feel is the right way to go, and don't concern yourself with what you think your boss would do in the same situation. Make your own decisions, know why you've made them and stick by them. If your boss disagrees with something you've done when they return, use it a chance to learn and to understand why they might have made a different decision – the best bosses will allow you the freedom to operate like this, and they will reign you in if they need to.

Making your own decisions will help people to see that you have integrity and that they can trust you. To do this you have to be as honest as you can possibly be – even when you know that others might disagree with you or when you think you might get into trouble. There is one exception to this rule – in your first management job after you graduate, if you accidentally smash something to pieces one day and you can get it cleared up before your boss gets back from lunch – you have my permission to keep it quiet. 10 years later you will class that boss as a good friend, and you will tell her about this one night after a few glasses of wine... she will find it funnier than she would have let on at the time!

You will quickly realise that the common theme throughout your career is all about your relationships with others, and this is the most important thing of all. You can learn something from everybody – BE A SPONGE. You will have team members who are experts in their fields, your peers and also your bosses. Try to take the best bits from each of these people and use those traits in a way that suits you. At the same time vow to try and never copy the things you view negatively in others. Be flexible with people and choose your battles – listen to people and try things that they suggest, you can always change course if things aren't working.

Finally – switch off at the end of the working day and do something to relax – you've got some busy days ahead!

John