



A message to my younger self

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Dear Tim the Younger,

I know you've got your head full of Hull KR, how to work out the returns on a 50 pence each way double, and day dreaming about whoever it is you've got a crush on this week however I just wanted to drop you a quick line to let you know the good news that you're still around in your 50s. Fingers crossed I'll be able to send you another one of these in 30 years' time.

Whilst I can't guarantee that I've always followed the advice I'm about to share with you, and believe me most of this stuff has taken an awfully long time to sink in with all of the attendant scars and missed opportunities along the way, what I can say is that it will all be an absolute blast so do enjoy the ride. I've also decided to work on the basis that people struggle to take in more than 3 things at a time and I promise that you're no different so there's no point in coming up with anything more in depth.

Firstly, it will dawn on you that it's much better to be respected than to be liked, although if you can achieve both then that's fab. This has been a bit of a tough one and it stems mainly from the decision you'll be forced to make around giving up your cherished rugby playing career due to injury and exchanging it for a referee's whistle in your early 30s, a decision which opens so many doors for you that it's almost impossible to bring to life in words. What ends up happening to that kid from East Hull as a consequence, who, whilst always being quite bright academically has somewhat blunted this through modest aspirations, really does go to show that you can create your own opportunities.

When you do finally hang up your whistle after reffing lots of times in the top English leagues as well as travelling all over the world you'll look back and understand that, whilst you might spend a lot of time and effort in trying to get people to like you, what really counts is gaining their respect through honesty, integrity, and holding your hand up to your mistakes. Doing it the other way round and trying to be liked first can mean you've got to compromise on some of those attributes, and when you look in a mirror there's only you looking back. The upside is that you'll probably find that once they do respect you the chances are that they'll probably like you too.

What follows on from this is the need to ensure that whatever else you try and do, don't worry about whether you're the best in your school/company/team/the world at whatever it is you're doing, just use your talents to be make sure you're the best Tim Wigglesworth can be at it. That in itself might actually mean that you are the best in a particular context, however what's more important is that you've channelled your energies into making the absolute most of what you, and only you, can bring to the task in hand.

Finally, if you can find a way to live in the moment, rather than regretting the past or worrying about what's still to come, you'll discover that the world is an amazing place. You'll have found this out through things like standing in the tunnel at Wembley Stadium before walking out for a match in front of 80,000 people plus a live television audience and as you walk out you'll look around and suck it all in and remind yourself to savour the moment. You'll also have found it out through noticing the absolutely vivid range of colours on the tail of a magpie as the sun shines on it, or through being aware of just how many different shapes, sizes and patterns there are of bees in your garden. I know I might sound a bit fluffy and Zen-like here, but the sooner you can master this one the sooner you'll find that inner contentment.

So there you go and its over to you from here. Just remember, don't take life too seriously as no one gets out alive in the end.

Tim the Elder