

A Letter to My Freshman Self

2nd Edition



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and Matthew Bulgarelli

Pursue decisions with your heart

Dear Freshman Self,

You're 17, six time zones from home, living in a so-called "triple" in the Freshmen Annex at St. Ed's, watching upperclassmen supervising cockroach races in the hallway, and wondering what the next four years have in store. Take my word for it, you'll soon fall in love with this place, even on hot days with no air conditioning. As great as your freshman year is, sophomore year gets even better as ND will admit women! You'll be intimidated by the lopsided male-female ratio, and be hesitant to ask these women for dates, fearing rejection, but "just do it." To your surprise, they'll say "Yes"!

Pursue a major with your heart, not your mind, and later do the same when choosing a career. If you enjoy your work and homework (most of the time, anyway), you'll enjoy your life's journey more, plus you'll be more successful as a result.

If a professor is outstanding, take him or her for more courses, as you'll remember the lessons best that you learned from a teacher who engages and inspires you. Given your many years studying *The Baltimore Catechism*, you're not thrilled with the two-theology course requirement but take the opportunity to study another faith at Notre Dame, like Islam. It will help you in business and in your personal life and contribute to your understanding of the world.

A Notre Dame education is a blessing and usually leads to a good white-collar job after graduation. Use your summers to get your hands dirty working alongside blue-collar workers. You'll acquire a special appreciation for the difficulty of their work and what these strong people do for our country and economy.

Set high life goals. Work hard. Don't settle for mediocrity. Strive to make a difference in the world.

Have fun and develop real friendships. The memories of the fun you had together will strengthen the bond you feel with true friends made, and these reflections will provide a valuable nutrient for your mind and psyche throughout your life.

And finally, you'll snicker about Notre Dame alumni and how silly and fashion-challenged they are as they walk around campus on football weekends in their garish green, blue and gold, and you'll swear you'll never look like that. I've got some really bad news for you...

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Dan Hesse currently serves as a member of the board of directors of PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC) and Akamai Technologies (NASDAQ: AKAM). Dan served as President and CEO of Sprint Corporation from December 2007 to August 2014. Previously, Hesse was the Chairman and CEO of Embarq Corporation, a \$6 billion telecommunications services company. From 2000-2004, he served as Chairman, President and CEO of Terabeam Corporation, a wireless telecommunications technology company. Hesse spent 23 years at AT&T. From 1997-2000, he served as the President and CEO of AT&T Wireless Services, at the time the United States' largest wireless carrier. He served as a member of the board of directors of VF Corporation from 1999-2008 and of Nokia from 2005-2007. He received a BA from Notre Dame, an MBA from Cornell, and an MS from MIT where he was awarded the Brooks Thesis Prize. He holds a Carnegie Mellon University/NACD CERT certificate in Cybersecurity Oversight. He serves on the National Board of Governors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the board of directors of the JUST Capital Foundation, and on the advisory boards of the New York Global Leaders Dialogue and of Rutberg and Company. In addition to receiving Corporate Responsibility Magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award, he has been named "Most Influential Person in Mobile Technology" by LAPTOP magazine (Steve Jobs was #2).