

Beresford, South Dakota
May 24, 1971

Dear Rick,

What ever happened to the past eighteen years? Before we got a chance to talk to you about the birds and bees, you could tell me -- and in Latin.

Up to here you've probably taught Mom and Dad more than we've taught you.

But just once, before you grow too completely away from us, I'd like you to look at some notes which we've written to ourselves over the years.

You'll do what your own ideals demand and seek what your own heart desires, regardless, but if your intelligence could somehow pick up where Dad's knowlege leaves off, it would spare you some skinned shins. Some of them; not all of them.

So that's the first entry in my notebook, and the last one: Get up when you fall down.

We all fall down. But the thing that separates the men from the boys is that a man gets up when he falls down.

Bear down on your school work, not just because the worlds needs you -- but you're going to need it. If you excel in what you do, you'll have to eat less crow; it's as simple as that.

I sugest you don't load up your closet with skeletons. Every time you make an un-erasable mistake, you'll have to carry that extra load the whole distance. This goes for the many causes which might tempt your heart, the con game that might get you an indelible police record, the girl you might disgrace, the disease you go looking for and the carelessness which costs a limb or life. Think overtime trying to anticipate and avoid un-erasable mistakes.

Smile a lot. Rick, there are only two ways you can pay your membership dues in the human race. You owe enthusiasm to your employer and pleasantness to your associates.

There are no two qualities of character which will reward you, personally, materially and otherwise, more than those two -- enthusiasm and pleasantness.

For goodness sake, find a kind of work that interests you and stick with it. I said work "that interests you." That is enough to ask. No job is all fun or all easy or even all pleasant, but if your job isn't interesting your' going to hoe a long hard row.

Rick, time is going to mellow you eventually whether you like it or not, but there'll be less wear and tear on you if you can roll with it. And you'll have your hair longer. Maybe your teeth, too.

You have your Mom's stubborn convictions about certain things. That's all right. We're glad you do. But don't deny the other fellow's right to have his convictions, too.

What I'm saying is that time is going to teach you a certain patience, even with impatience; a degree of tolerance, even for intolerance.

I hope you don't drink or smoke much, leave the drugs and dope for the insecure, that can't live or admit a mistake, because like we've said before life has a way of overcharging a fellow for overindulgence.

I hope you don't swear much. Any durn fool can swear. And when the world looks lopsided, remember that you, personally, are being sized up for a more symmetrical place. If you can -- measure up.

Remember always our home always has more love and more room for you than you can ever need or ever use up.

Congradulations on your new completion of another phase in life, it is a happy time for you, yet a sad time you are no-longer a boy now your a man so much more is expected of you.

May you continue to do as well with your life as you have done so far.

Love,

Dad & Mom