

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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A
Lisa,

What a wonderful autobiography. I enjoyed reading it very much. It reflects all the beautiful forces that have made you the mature young woman you are today. I hope you will continue to add new chapters to a story well-begun and you leave it for your son to appreciate the heroic efforts you have expended on his behalf.

It has been a pleasure to have you in class. Best of life in the future. You certainly deserve it.

Mrs. Fahey
June, 1993

Chapter I: Birth

I was born on August 13, 1975, at 4:34pm, at Boston City Hospital. When my mother went into labor, she was at home cooking dinner for her and my brother. She then began having minor pains, so she thought that if she sat down for a little while they would go away. She was fooled because not long after that she started having severe pains. She and my older brother, who was only two at the time, went next door to my aunt's house. That was when she went to the hospital. My mother was in labor for only two hours! I was easier to have than my brother. He took nearly a day.

My mother said that I was a good baby. The only time I ever gave her any problems was when it was time to eat. When I got hungry I wanted to eat right there and then. She said that I had the strongest lungs and my cry would cause anyone to go in the opposite direction.

Although I had strong lungs, I was a very sick baby. My mother spent weeks in the hospital with me due to my illness, asthma. I was on several medications to keep my lungs clear and my mother was the one who gave me most of it. She said that she would sit for hours patting my back to get some of the mucous up. This therapy went on until my second birthday. My mother felt relieved to know that I was getting better and she was also happy to have me home with her and my brother.

Chapter II: Earliest Memories

One of my earliest memories occurred when I was three. My mother's friend, James, was running water so that he could give me a bath. He left the bathroom for a minute and I was waiting on the floor for him to come back. I was so anxious to get in the tub that I got up and hopped right in (head first), I can remember him running in the bathroom then grabbing me out.

Another one of my earliest memories was when I was in kindergarten. I stayed over my godmother's house one weekend and she braided my and my godsister's hair in a whole bunch of ugly braids. I never did like it when she did my hair like that. The next day when I went to school, my best friend, (at least I thought that she was my best friend) told me that she wasn't going to be my friend anymore because my hair was ugly. I was crying and I couldn't seem to understand why she wasn't going to be my friend. When I arrived home later on that day, I explained to my mother that I had a terrible day. That's when she taught me, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

Last but not least, I remember when my brother, my godsister and I were cooking lunch. I can't remember exactly what we were cooking, but I can remember the rice. My godsister was cooking it and it was spilling onto the burner. There was a mess everywhere. I was making the drinks so I got the ice crusher.

I didn't know what I was doing but I thought that I would get it one way or another. I put the ice in the crusher and for some reason it wouldn't crush. I went to get a chair so that I could see what I was doing, when for some odd reason, I decided to stick my finger in the blender. The blade spun around and nearly cut my finger off. My mother rushed over and took me to the emergency room where I got stitches.

Chapter III: School Days

I can clearly remember my first day at kindergarten. My brother was attending the same school that I was, the David A. Ellis in Roxbury, MA. My mother woke me up early that morning and I was so anxious that I popped right up. She cooked breakfast for us and then did my hair. I loved the way she did my hair that day. I had a curly bang in the front and a ponytail with pink and white ribbons. I also had on a pretty pink and white dress.

On the way to school I kept asking my brother questions about my new school. I even asked him questions that not even he could answer. As we got closer to school I started getting nervous, but when I went to my class I felt almost like I had been there before. My classmates were so nice, as well as my teacher, Mrs. Hill.

We played a game that helped us get to know each other and enabled me to become very close friends with a girl named Mikel. We had lunch together, and we also played in the playhouse. I felt wanted, knowing that everyone was so kind.

At the end of the day we were all outside playing. The girls played jump rope while the boys played kickball. My mother came to pick me up and I was so excited to introduce her to my new friend. My mother was happy to know that I had a good day and was more than welcome to hear about it. First grade I was still attending the same school. It wasn't as foreign to me because I had been there for a school year.

My first grade teacher was Mr. Santos. He was nice to all of the students. There was one student in my class who always caused problems. He would throw things at us and at the teacher. His mother had to come to the school all the time, until finally they transferred him out of the class.

I learned a lot in first grade. I also got the honor roll for all four terms. My mother would always give me a surprise for bringing home good grades and I was more than happy to bring them home to her.

Second grade was really fun. I took my first music class in the second grade. My teacher's name was Ms. Mclellan. She was so nice to me. She would always give me the privilege of getting our music class organized. The only instruments that we had were flutes, and I loved to play the flute. I used to go home everyday and practice, "Three Blind Mice." After a while I was a pro at it.

I also remember getting stabbed in my arm with a pencil. I can't remember why I got stabbed but I do remember who did it. Her name was Tyiesha. The teacher took her to the office and she was sent home. I still have the wound on my arm.

The third grade I remember as quite challenging. Not on a school work level, but on a friendship level. There was a new girl in school named Yvonne. For some reason, everyone wanted to be with Yvonne, causing confrontations among our third grade class.



Yvonne and I gradually became friends. She lived one block away from me, a nearness which allowed us to become even closer. She was a fun person to be with, and I always felt comfortable discussing important issues with her.

My fourth grade teacher's name was Mr. Squillante, a heavy-set, middle-aged man. Mr. Squillante was my favorite teacher because he was always willing to explain things to us with open arms. Unlike some teachers, he was considerate of those who needed extra help on a particular assignment.

We went on an apple picking field trip along with others who attended our school. This trip gave everyone a chance to come together. After the field trip, we went back to school, and made apple pies. Everyone worked together making the task as simple as one, two, three.

My fifth grade teacher was Mrs. Thompson. I can visualize my fifth grade class. It was on the fifth floor where we could see all around the neighborhood. Mrs. Thompson allowed us to have pet fish and birds. Everyone took turns cleaning out the fish tank or bird cage. It was fun doing this because it gave me a feeling of being responsible.

I got my period when I was in the fifth grade. I was in Mrs. Thompson's classroom when I realized it. She was the first to know that I had begun menstruation. She sat me down and talked to me about it. Although my mother had already explained it to me, I still felt insecure about it. After my discussion with her, I felt relieved knowing that I could count on someone to be there for me at times like these.

Eighth grade was a difficult year for me. I got pregnant while I was going to Latin School. The staff at Latin asked me to leave the school because they thought that I would influence others. I didn't want to leave the school because all of my friends were so nice to me. I felt unwanted so I decided that it would be best for me to leave. I think that was one of the worst mistakes that I made.

Lisa Henderson

I attended the Mary E. Curley Middle School where there were a lot of familiar faces. A lot of the students lived in my neighborhood, so I knew them.

My homeroom teacher's name was Mr. Ruiz. We had seven different classes unlike elementary school, a new experience for me.

My favorite class was Geography with Mr. Gill as my teacher. He would always tell jokes which related to Geography, making learning fun for those who thought that they would never find that subject interesting.

I took an examination in my sixth grade class. This exam determined whether or not I would get into an exam school. The test was very challenging but I stuck it through and passed. The school that I would be attending was Boston Latin. My mother was proud to know that I had passed the exam.

My seventh grade was different for me because I was at a new school and I had to adapt myself to the new environment. My classes were extremely different. I had much more homework. and it was difficult trying to learn the Latin language.

My closest friend was a girl named Kai. She introduced me to the majority of the people who had already been there. That was a relief because the school was big and I felt more comfortable being able to speak with more students.

Chapter 4: Major World events during My Youth

In 1976 Jimmy Carter was the president of the United States, the Viet Nam Vets returned, and Tall Ships sailed from New York to Boston. In 1988 Communism collapsed in Russia and Eastern Europe and the bombing of The World Trade Towers occurred.

In 1981 a deadly disease was diagnosed. This disease was called Aids. It was mainly among homosexuals and I.V. drug users, but now it is among teens and it's spreading rapidly. There is no cure for this disease, so, therefore, many people are dying from it.

Smoking cigarettes is not popular in the nineties. Although there are many people who smoke, it is mainly because they are addicted and not because they want to look cool. The Gay Rights movement was promoted by our 1993 elected president, Bill Clinton. A lot of people protested against it because they thought that gay's shouldn't be allowed in the military.

Crime is an extremely big issue in the nineties. A lot of teens were killed due to gang violence. This was one of the things that made the 90's a less fortunate decade. Many teens that I knew died because of violence. There were also many incidents where innocent bystanders were killed in cross fire. Some of the teens that I knew were Tyrone, who was shot to death and Tiffany, who was an innocent bystander.

Stalking was a great concern after numerous events of domestic violence. The law cracked down on it by increasing the penalty, if found guilty. Now stalking is looked at in a different perspective, so hopefully the number of cases will reduce.

In 1992, there was an incident in Los Angeles with the victim, Rodney King, and L.A. police. Because of the verdict, it caused a riot in L.A. L.A. police was found not guilty for the beating of Rodney King, which caused many racial issues. L.A. police was later found guilty in the beaten.

In the 90's rap and reggae was the most popular music to listen to. Some of the groups included, Boogie Down Productions, Run DMC, Ice Cube, Cutty Ranks and many more. There were several dances that everyone did. In the 80's some of the dances were called the, cabbage patch, wop, hype, and ticking. In the 90's there were different dances such as, Santa Barbara, Bougle, and the butterfly. These dances were made only for reggae music.

Fashion is a big thing. The most frequently worn clothing would include, Champion sweaters, Levis jeans, Cross Colors and many more. It is important to dress up to date although people are beginning to wear clothes from the 60's, such as bell bottoms, and those big shoes. I really don't like that style.



Chapter 5: Likes and Dislikes

My favorite season is Spring because I love seeing the flowers bloom and hearing the birds chirp. Waking up in the morning is so much easier when I can hear the sounds of birds chirping and smell the clean, fresh air.

My least favorite season is Summer because it's too hot, especially when I have an outside job. One summer I worked outside on a clean-up crew. It was the worst summer that I had yet. We had to clean vacant lots and cut bushes. Somedays I thought that I was going to faint because of the hot weather, but I still did.

My favorite pet is a bird because birds have a sense of humor. If you really get to know your bird, you'll begin to understand the difference in the things that he wants by observing his gestures.

My least favorite pet is a dog because when I was 12 years old I was bitten on my finger by a dog whom I thought was my friend. It wasn't major, but, ever since then, I've been scared of all dogs. I would like to get a puppy and train him so that he will know me and I can trust him.

My favorite person is my son because he is giving me that extra boost. I look at life in a different way since I had him. I know that it is important for me to do my best for the sake of the both of us. We also have a lot of things in common, such as our sense of humor and our physical features.



MAY
M28

A lot of people think that he is my little brother because I look so young and he look so old.

My least favorite person is someone who is phony. There are a lot of people who smile in your face, then talk about you when you're not around. I don't understand why people do things like that especially when a person like myself can recognize things like this.

My favorite food is Chinese because I love rice and the restaurants give you more than enough. My favorite dish is pepper steak, pork fried rice, and chicken fingers. I think I could eat this dish everyday if I had the money to buy it.

My least favorite foods are cabbage and meatloaf. My mother used to make cabbage and meatloaf at least once a week. She used to ask me to try it, but when I did, I got sick. I've tried it since then, but I still don't like it.

My favorite colors are red, lime green, and orange because they are colorful, cheerful, and vivid and remind me of spring. My least favorite color is black because it's gloomy and reminds me of death.

My favorite place to go with my friends is to a party or to the mall. It's fun going to the mall with my friends because we can help each other decide whether or not something looks good on us.

My least favorite place to go is to the hospital because they always take forever to service you. They always give you an appointment and then make you wait for at least an hour before you are seen. It's so aggravating, especially when I'm there on time.

My favorite car is a Lexus. They are expensive but I hope to own one some day. They look so comfortable and are automatic. My least favorite car is anything standard because I don't know how to drive one. I hope I learn to drive a standard some day.

My favorite activities are shopping for clothes and eating. I love going to the malls because there are so many clothes stores and food shops. I find clothes shopping interesting because of the many different styles.

My least favorite activity is being on a crowded bus. It is so annoying because it's usually hot and the bus ride is longer than usual. I think that there should be more buses during rush hours so a bus ride will be more comfortable.

My favorite subject is algebra because it is a fun subject to learn if you have a good teacher. Algebra is almost like a game; once you learn it you can become a pro. My algebra 1 teacher was Mrs. Gelzinas, an extremely good teacher. I learned a lot from her. On the other hand, my algebra 2 teacher, Mr. Thompson, was not as good as her. Therefore, I found it difficult to learn from him.

My favorite perfume is Skin Musk. I love it because it has a soft scent unlike most others. It's a type of fragrance that I can wear for a life time. It is also inexpensive so I can have plenty of it. My least favorite perfume is Opium.

My favorite sneakers are Reeboks, which are so comfortable, and come in different styles and colors. They make shopping easier because you can always find something to match the different colors.

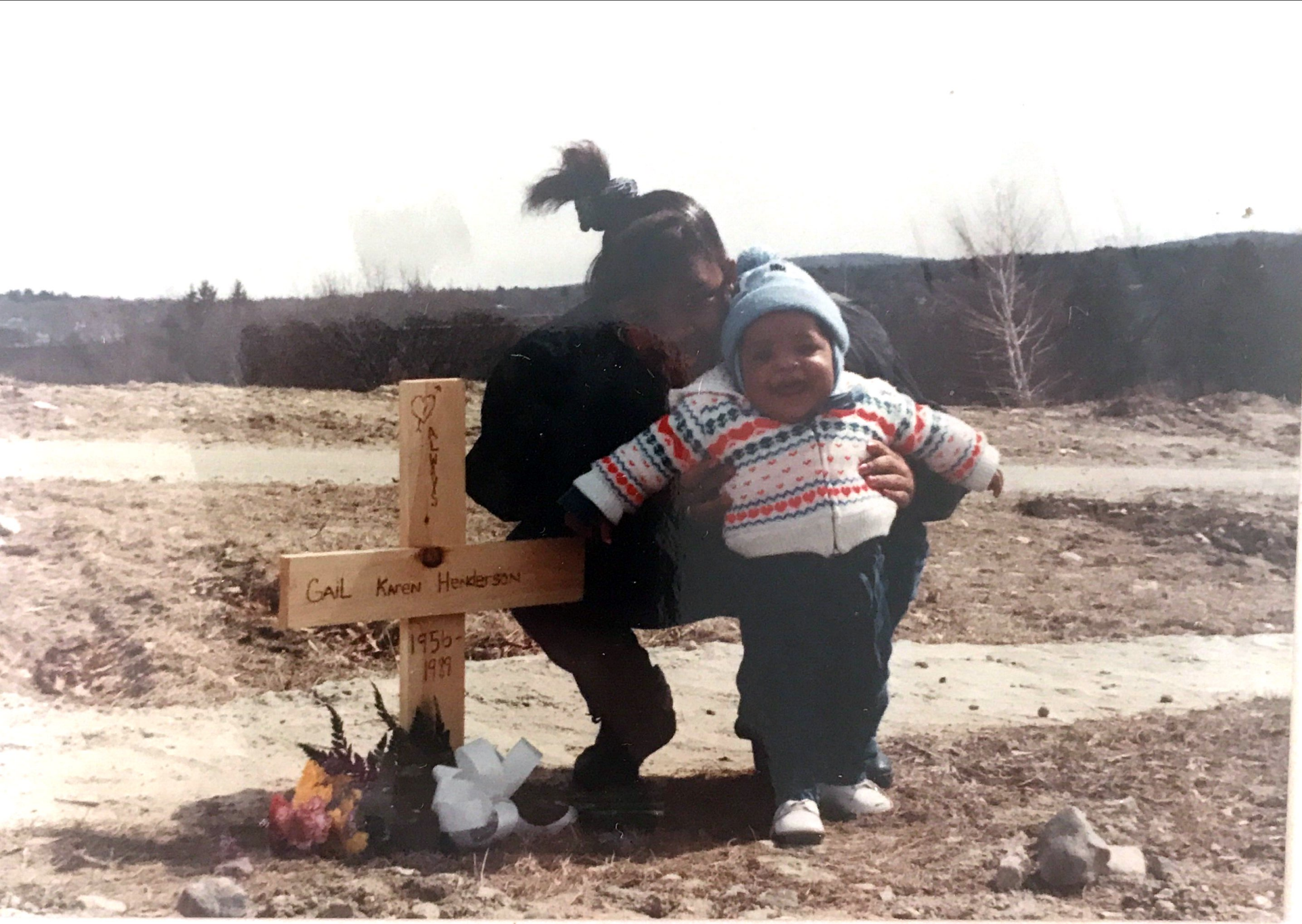
My least favorite sneakers are Converse. A lot of people are wearing the All-Stars now, but they are not my style. They also look uncomfortable, although I never tried them on and I don't plan to.

Chapter 6: Funniest Memories

Some of my funniest memories occurred when I was a child. I remember when I graduated from elementary school, I was nervously walking across the stage, when I lost my balance. I caught myself before I fell off the stage. I was so embarrassed, but now when I think about it, all I can do is laugh.

Another one of my funniest memories is when I used to bother my brother. I would put on my sun dress and while he was watching television, or doing something that he enjoyed, I would start spinning in circles and I singing a crazy song that I had made up. He used to hate when I did that, but his displeasure gave me even more reason to do it.

Lisa Henderson



GAIL KAREN HENDERSON

1956-
1989

Chapter 7: Saddest Memory

My mother died on April 16, 1989. The death of my mother shattered my life. I was pregnant, with my son, who is now four years old, at the time of her death. Losing my mother at that time made it even harder for me to cope with life.

My son was born a month after she passed away. I knew that taking care of myself and my new son was essential. My mother taught me to be responsible and to do my best, giving me the strength to do all that I could do, if she were there with me. I love my mother very much. All of my accomplishments are for her, my son, and myself. I want her to be proud of me, that's my goal.

Lisa Henderson





Chapter 8: People who Influenced Me

Some of the people who influenced me in my life includes, my son, mother, brother, and big sister. There are many more, but they influenced me the most.

I've always believed that my son was a recreation of my mother. He reminds me of her in so many ways; that's why he has influenced my life. I know that it is important for him to have a role model, that's my priority, making sure that he experiences as many positive things as possible.

My mother influenced my life by raising me the right way. Although she died while I was young, she made sure that I did the right things whether it was in school or at home. This positive structure has had a decided impact on my life.

My brother is two years older than I so he gave me a chance to have someone, who was doing positive things to look up to. He is now a junior at U-Mass, Amherst and doing excellently. that is what I plan to do also.

I met my big sister through The Big Sister Association three months after my mother died. I didn't want a sister at first, but after we went out a couple of times, I started enjoying her company. She spent a lot of time with me and my son. Our visits kept my mind off the tragedy that had recently occurred. We have known each other for almost four years now and it has been a pleasure having her in my life. When I look at her I see myself. She is married, has a son, a car, and a beautiful home, and that is what I want, in the future.



Alex

"We have one and only one ambition. To be the best. What else is there?"

SKYDIVING
WITH ALGEBRA
DO MATH



Alex

Chapter 9: High School Years

I chose English High School because I heard a lot about the teachers and also knew people who attended the school. Knowing people attending a new school really makes a difference in not making you feel like a stranger in an unfamiliar place.

My freshman year was the best year that I have had so far. I met so many different people that year, including my best friends, Tazuwa, Chaka, Kenniah, and Ebony. Our friendships are unbreakable and we plan to keep them that way.

My favorite teachers were Mrs. Shields and Mrs. Gelzinas. Mrs. Shields, my Earth Science teacher, was strict in her own way, but, her being strict gave those who were still kidding around, as if they were still in middle school, a chance to see what high school was like: Learning, not fun and games. Learning as much as possible was what she expected of everyone. She started teaching from the moment we stepped into the class until the end of the period, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

Mrs. Gelzinas, my Algebra 1, teacher was a pro when it came to teaching by strategies. Some students thought learning using strategies was impossible, but later found out that it was a good method. In Algebra 2 class, I found that the strategies were very helpful I was one of the students who thought that using strategies would be impossible.

Chapter 10: My Job Experiences

I worked in an ice cream parlor when I was twelve years old although I told a little lie regarding my age. At twelve, I was anxious to earn extra money so I applied for several jobs. Later on that week I received a call from Your's Forty Ice Cream to come in for an interview. At that moment I got a positive feeling about the job I knew that I would qualify.

My interview was short, but nerve-wracking. I was asked several questions including the hours I would be able to work and previous work experience. Because of my age I was only allowed to work until six in the evening. I was trained by another employee and then immediately went to work. I enjoyed working because there was always something to do. It also gave me a chance to have extra money.

I worked for The Boston Youth Campaign when I was fifteen. This was a summer job for youths who wanted to earn some money for cleaning up the city. Everyone called us "The Red Shirts", because that was what we wore while working. The job was tiring, but worthwhile. Although it was tough, I felt good knowing that I had participated in beautifying the city.



anna Lydia
PPY

At sixteen, I worked in a daycare with toddlers. I enjoyed working with toddlers because at that time my son was a toddler. It was fun to see how different children have different ways of doing or saying things. I learned a lot from them and they learned a lot from me. At the end of the summer, it was hard saying goodbye. I didn't want to leave, but, it was only a summer job.

My responsibilities were making sure that toddlers were fed breakfast, lunches, snacks, and doing different activities with them, such as, finger painting and ABC's. I found this interesting because it gave me a chance to watch them grow mentally and physically. This job required a lot of time and patience, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

I'm currently working at Brigham and Women's Hospital in the recovery room. I've been working there for three months. I find this job interesting because I'm seeing and doing things that I plan to do in the future. This job is giving me a lot of experience which will help me when I attend college. Thanks to ProTech, I'm pursuing my goals.

Chapter 11: My Thoughts About Being 17

My thoughts about being seventeen are, I now realize what adults mean when they say, "I wish I were young again." Reality hits you in your face without warning. I enjoyed being seventeen because of the many things that I have accomplished during these years. I've had lots of support from people, including, my stepparents, teachers, close friends, and my counselor and I appreciate every last bit of it.





Chapter 12: My Future

When I look into the future, I see many positive things, -positive because that is all I want for myself and my family.

I want to be a nurse and a cosmetologist. I know that it's going to be hard, but I'm willing to go the extra yards to make life pleasant for my son. I haven't thought about marriage, but someday I plan to marry and have another child. I want also want to move out of the city. I was born and raised here and I've seen how the inner city can prevent people from pursuing their goals, and I do not want that for my children.

Lisa Henderson