

What Inspired Me to Write This Selection

“When I was asked to write a letter to myself as a teenager, I thought about all the things I would have done differently over the last fifteen years or so. But then I thought about how all those things have added up to create who I am now and where I stand. I guess there’s not much I really would do differently. But one piece of advice I wish I had heard a little earlier in life was to really embrace what it means to be Canadian. When you live in Canada and nowhere else, it is hard to really know what that means, but after spending ten years in the United States, I realize what a special place Canada is and how proud we all should be of what we have at home.”

Written by Lorne Cardinal

Lorne is an actor and director best known for his roles on *Corner Gas* and *North of 60*. He’s worked across the country and the United States for over twenty years in theatre, TV, radio, and film. While growing up, he lived in High Prairie, Ft. Vermillion, Prince George, Keremeos, Kamloops, Kelowna, and Edmonton. With the many moves came new schools. He and his brother were practised at being the new kids!

Dear Lorne,

Hey there, bud, in 1980. I hope your day’s going good! You’re probably anywhere except class, so on that note I thought I’d give you some advice from here in the future! I’d like to tell you stuff that would help the bank account, like buy Bre-X stock or Apple but I’ll share a few things more valuable ...

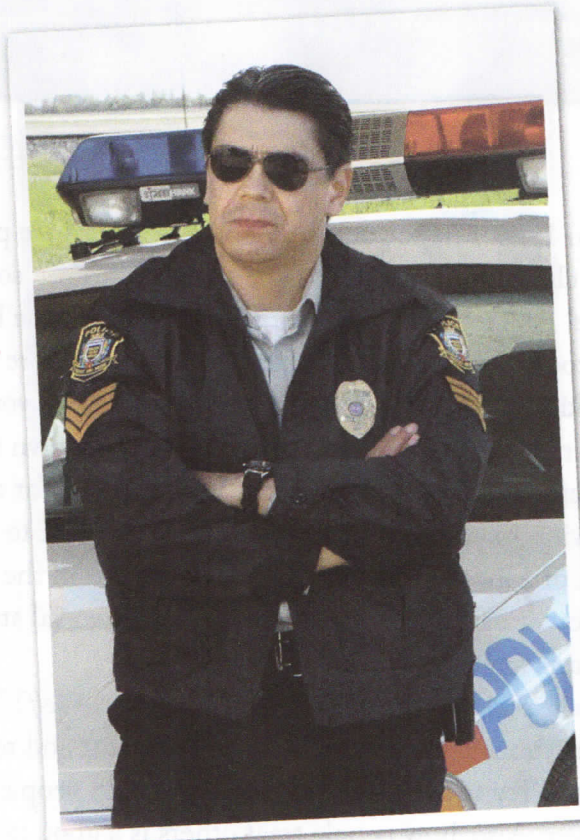
First, stop skipping classes because you’re only hurting yourself; you’ll find that out when you try to get into college a little bit down the road and find that 50 percent average isn’t what schools are looking for and you’ll spend precious time having to upgrade. I know no one ever said it to you but, believe me, you’re a heck of a lot smarter than you think, so put in the effort and you’ll be surprised at how it pays off. Plus, you love English, social studies, history, biology, and the arts anyway!

Secondly, I can’t stress how important it is to *be yourself*! Try not to worry about what others think about you. Just try to be honest and respectful to yourself and others. Try to look for important things in people, like integrity, honesty, and loyalty. Also, how people treat others is a good indicator of their spirit and how they’ll most likely treat you!

Thirdly, try to listen to your dad. I know it's tough and he's in a bad place right at the moment, and you feel left alone to tend to things, but I'll tell you, he knows what he's talking about. It is important to understand your culture, and the history of your people and family because that's where your strength will come from when faced with adversity. Eventually things will be clear when you find out what he went through at residential school. It will explain his behaviour and the anger he has towards everybody at this time. Have patience and realize that he is doing the best he can with what he knows.

Lastly, tell him how much you love him, or, when it's safe, how much you're mad at him because he'll understand and talk to you about things ... Also, even though he hasn't said it and you haven't given him a lot to work with at this time, but he *is* proud of you and he loves you! This is important for you to know because when he's passed on, you will miss him every day and wish you could've said this more: I LOVE YOU, DAD!

Yours truly,
Lorne Cardinal



Lorne Cardinal playing Davis on the TV show *Corner Gas*.