

## Big Decisions: A Multi-Generational Theme

### Part I:

The most defining moment of my life came to me quite unexpectedly from a teacher me and my peers all despised. It was in a class most students regarded as “fluff”: unimportant, dull, and inconsequential. We met once per day to discuss the process of taking notes, proper study habits, and on rare occasions future career options. One particularly relevant assignment asked us to research two careers of interest to us.

Though, as a child I had dreamed of being an artist, I had long regarded that as an inconsiderable option for myself. I thought it an unsafe career option, so instead, I had set my sights on becoming a veterinarian, a respectable and rich career I had thought, though it never really piqued my interest. However, at a loss for a second option, I chose “artist” for my other career choice. Upon handing in my assignment the teacher looked at me dumbfounded and berated me in front of the entire class. She told me very plainly that “artist” was not a job. She told me it made no money at all and was a thing of the past. She pointed me in the direction of a list of what she referred to as “real” jobs and told me not to pick something just because I thought it’d be fun.

I changed my career choice an instant, though not in the way she had intended. At that moment I began to think of all the artists I knew working today and how they came from situations just like mine. “If they could do it why couldn’t I?” I thought, “and they must make money too”. I thought of all the time and effort I put into developing my skills, of every compliment I’ve gotten, and every award I’ve won. At that moment all my doubts melted away in a moment of defiance and I forgot all the fears I had about failing. It only took being told that I couldn’t for me to finally believe that I could, and now I’m going to prove her wrong and become the artist I had always dreamed of being.



### Part II:

My parents, at a fairly young age, had a life-altering, and daunting decision to make that would change the course of their lives. They grew up in a minute, claustrophobic Colorado town whose population consisted of a few thousand of the some of the most religious folks in America. My diligently Mormon grandparents were no exception to this rule. My parents met at work, where my father was an assistant manager, and my mom his employee, and so, from the beginning, their relationship was forbidden.

Feeling the pangs of love, however, they could no longer hide their affections, and so they quit to pursue their relationship. Not six months later my mother became unexpectedly pregnant with a baby girl. Both, growing up in religious households, knew that having the baby



out of wedlock would spell trouble, and, having no doubts in one another, they decided to elope. Just after finding out my mother was pregnant they had packed their bags and headed to Las Vegas.

In Vegas, they got married in a small church, with no friends or family to surround them. My grandparents did not attend the wedding, nor did they approve of each other's picks. My parents had told their parents only a few days before the wedding, and only skepticism and criticism had been returned. My parents knew that by marrying so early and having a child so young, they were risking their futures, but they trusted in one another and decided to forge their own path forward. They didn't care what their family back home had said, or what

anyone thought about them. Today they have three children and have been happily married for 22 fantastic years.