



Katie Manzer
Undergraduate, Psychology

Katie Manzer graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. in Psychology in May 2008. While a student at CSUF, she was involved in many leadership roles including Director of Administration and Psychology Department Representative for the College of H&SS Inter Club Council, Editor of the Psychology Peer Mentor Newsletter, and President of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology. Katie is also a member of Golden Key Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society. Off campus, Katie works at a non-profit counseling center as the Office Manager, and volunteers her time at Laguna Road Elementary School. Katie will be starting a graduate program at CSULB in fall 2008 to earn an MA in Educational Psychology and Pupil Personnel Services Credential to become a School Psychologist.

Good morning,

For a number of years, I lived my life according to “the plan”. I had mapped out everything for myself, I was going to finish college by age 20, graduate from San Diego State University, establish a successful career as an MFT by 23, marry by 24 and have my first child by 26. I was determined to fill my resume with honor society memberships, and whatever else the Career Center told me would be useful. It all seemed so perfect, like the hardest part was behind me in the organization of it all. I was on the fast track with my plan; no super senior status for me, no messing around; I meant business; it was just me and my plan.

I became obsessively focused on what my final destination would be, doing all that I could to reach that place as quickly and efficiently as possible. In hind sight, I didn’t realize that in doing this, I was missing all of the enjoyable and meaningful pit-stops along the way. Then one day, I found myself at a graduate school conference at USC in 2006 and just happened to sit down next to Laura Castro, last years Outstanding Undergraduate. Before I knew it I had transferred to Cal State Fullerton and got involved with the college of Humanities and Social Sciences Inter Club Council. I had ditched my idea of being an MFT and finishing in three years was out of the question.

I soon found that my life was taking many unexpected turns and I remember saying to myself, “This isn’t how it is supposed to happen. The place where I have ended up isn’t even on my map!” I didn’t know what to do; I had strayed so far from my plan that I was beginning to think I was going to be lost forever. Then I remembered someone had once told me I should just throw away the life plan, to just let it go.

I refused to entertain the idea for a long while. Yet, all of a sudden, I was connected to a university for the first time. Then Laura caught me outside the Humanities Building one afternoon and told me that I had to run for President of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology- this was definitely was not in my plan! But nevertheless, I soon started to realize that life without this plan wasn’t all that bad. It had led me to this university, it led me to seek active leadership roles within the Psychology Department; and it led me to establish amazing relationships with faculty and peers. I found a career field that I am passionate about, and I worked with an amazing team of girls who together, along with the support of the entire department, earned Psi Chi the Silver Medal for Student Organization of the Year out of 268 recognized clubs on campus.

Looking back on it all, my fast paced life plan was keeping me from enjoying all of the wonderful things that the university and life have to offer. Had I held on to that plan and not taken the advice to let it go, I would not have stuck around to become President of Psi Chi, to share exciting headlines with students as Editor of the Peer Mentor Newsletter, to find that I have a passion for educational psychology and psychological testing, and to be standing here today, representing the department as the Outstanding Undergraduate. I had to take a few detours to get to where I am today but I hope that you can follow in my lead and immerse yourself in the opportunities of the now. Don’t get me wrong, a little direction and motivation is always necessary, but try to enjoy the ride, referencing the final end point only when necessary.

Before I finish, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank, on behalf of all of the Psychology Students graduating with me today, all of our mentors, professors, peers, family and friends who have made our lives meaningful and who have supported us without avail.

And to my fellow graduates, I hope that you will walk out of this gym here today and leave those suffocating, “life plans” in your seats; I hope that you will take time to enjoy the journey, and not fixate solely on the destination; you will reach it in due time. Congratulations Class of 2008. Thank you.

Katie Manzer