

Lessons in Life

I have learned many important lessons in life that will help me get through very difficult times. No one has taught me these lessons better than my little sister, Kendra. I am very thankful that Kendra is a part of my life. I hope she feels the same way about the rest of my family and me.

Kendra is my adopted sister from China. My family adopted her when she was just fifteen months old. A few weeks before we adopted her, my family received a picture of her. I looked into Kendra's innocent eyes and all I saw was sadness. I could not even imagine what her life was like. I had heard rumors in magazines and newspapers about the large number of orphans in China. Most parents are only allowed to have one child in China because of the over-population. If a mother happens to have more than one child, she could get in trouble with the government or forced to pay a fine, which usually the mother cannot possibly afford. Sometimes the mother in China drowns her newborn in a nearby lake. More commonly, the mother abandons her child on a street for someone to take to an orphanage. Kendra was one of these babies, she was found on a street corner when she was just three days old, so, I could somewhat understand why she looked so miserable. This leads to my first lesson in life: Appreciate what you have, whether it's the people that surround you, the freedoms that belong to you or the possessions that you own, because some people would be glad to have what you have.

I was very anxious to see my new sister for the first time. My mother went to pick up Kendra from China. The rest of our family waited eagerly to greet the new member of our family at the airport. As the hours passed, I caught a glimpse of my mom and I looked down at her and there I saw, what could have been the most beautiful child, Kendra. There she was, looking the same as she did in the picture, except she was smiling and eyes lit up the whole room. That smile taught me another lesson: keep moving forward in life. When I compared Kendra's face in the picture with the one smiling at the airport, I realized she had moved on in life. Whatever happened in her life before seemed non-existent at that point. If something happens in life that is dreadful and unbearable, chances are that life will eventually get better, so keep moving forward in life.

Another lesson in life I have learned is: Don't take life too seriously. Kendra changes a depressing day into a magnificent moment just by hearing the sound of her voice. She laughs at just about everything, including things that aren't even funny. I am only going to have one life, so I might as well have an enjoyable and exciting one.

A really important lesson I have learned from Kendra is: Help those who can't help themselves. Kendra would not have the freedoms and opportunities that she has today without my parent's decision to adopt her. This influenced me greatly to help others. I have been donating to charities more than I ever did before. I care for other people more than I ever did.

My family has given Kendra a whole new life. She is very lucky, but somehow, it seems that my family and I are even luckier. Kendra has contributed so much to our family and without her, something would be missing in each of us. This has taught me my last lesson (so far): If you give to someone, they might give you something back that is even more valuable than what you gave to them. This concludes the lessons that Kendra has taught me. I can pretty much guarantee that she will teach me many more lessons as our lives go on.