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J200: Question and Answer Story

Looking Forward to the Future and Living in the Present

 Kirsten Anderson, residing in a western suburb of Chicago, is an alumna of Purdue University and the mother of four children. Throughout her life, she has received a pre-law degree, been a part of multiple family businesses, and successfully raised her children. In my interview with Kirsten, we discussed her career, how she is dealing with the “shelter-in-place” due to COVID-19, and her advice for college students. On Thursday, April 16th, 2020, she allowed me to dig deeper with an interview; this has been edited briefly for length and clarity.

**Morgan Anderson (interviewer):** Where did you grow up and attend high school and college?

**Kirsten Anderson (interviewee):** I grew up in St. Charles, Illinois and went to St. Charles High School. For college, I went to Purdue University.

**MA:** What was your major at Purdue and were you apart of any extra-curricular activities there?

**KA:** I was in a sorority and I was in pre-law club, cause my major was pre-law. My plan was to go to law school after undergrad.

**MA:** Did you go to law school?

**KA:** No, I didn’t. I actually got a job as a human resources manager, so I didn’t go to law school, I ended up just working.

**MA:** Shifting gears, how are you dealing with the “shelter-in-place?”

**KA:** Well, I think that it makes sense that we should stay at home, and, but I think moving forward we need to figure out some way to have our lives return to somewhat normal, but a cautious normal, and have businesses reopen, and things like that. I think for the next couple of weeks it makes sense, but we need to figure out a plan for the future.

**MA:** How has this affected your day-to-day life?

**KA:** Well, I definitely am not used to staying home this much. It’s affected, socially we can’t go to restaurants, it has affected vacations, spring break we didn’t get to go to Florida. My children’s lives, as far as school, my youngest is in high school and today it was just ordered that he will be online for the rest of the year. My oldest daughter [a senior at UIUC] was supposed to graduate in May, and that has been a huge disappointment, not having that ceremony.

**MA:** That is really sad. But what has been one of your favorite parts about the past couple of weeks?

**KA:** Well, all four of my kids are home, plus my oldest son’s wife and my oldest daughter’s boyfriend, plus three dogs; it is never boring in our house. It’s so fun though, the game nights, and ping pong tournaments, and the togetherness is nice; I love a full house. But because of the snow and cold this week, the level of stir-craziness has gone up a little bit.

**MA:** That’s really nice. What’s one thing you have learned from being a mom of four kids?

**KA:** Don’t sweat the small stuff. I have to kind of let somethings kind of roll. Like Brendan and the ketchup bottle [backstory- the youngest of our family, crushed a ketchup container the other day and it splattered all over the kitchen], I was a little more agitated then than I normally am, but having four kids has definitely taught me to be extremely laid back, and small things like the ketchup, are not really worth freaking out about.

**MA:** Yeah, that was pretty interesting. What’s piece of advice you wish you could’ve given yourself when you were my age/in college?

**KA:** I would say that you should not stay on any sort of like timeline, like you should enjoy your life and not have the mindset that “I have to have this accomplished by” such and such time. You just need to enjoy where you are, make plans for the future and have goals, but not surround your life around that; live in the moment where you are and enjoy. I wish I could have told myself that at 19.

**MA:** Well thank you very much for your time and for your answers.

**KA:** Of course, anytime.