

Dear 16-year-old me: Gemma Hunter, Global ECD & Head of MBA Australia

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If Gemma Hunter, MediaCom Global ECD & Head of MBA Australia, could go back and teach her 16-year-old self one thing, it's that purpose can be found in people and the teams you work with.

Dear Gemma,

I have some initial upsetting news... you have not become a three-day eventer, riding horses on national television! But not all is bad, which is why I want to talk to you.

Remember how mum and dad used to say it is hard work, passion, commitment, resilience and, of course, a sense of humour helps you to achieve what you want? Well, they're right.

And, now, as the older figure, I have some more advice to add:

Although you may not think about it too much now, sexism is a real issue and people will try and hold you back purely for the gender you were born with. Don't let them. There will even be managers that will tell you that you can't progress because of this. Don't listen to them, listen to your heart and use your mind to outwit their incorrect views.

Secondly, not every job is going to be the job for you. I will warn you now but sales is not for you unless of course, you are selling an idea you believe in, then you will be magnificent. I wouldn't change that experience because I learnt so much about myself and my curious mind. What followed was some of the best years of my life.

Eight years at MTV was amazing and gloriously strange. There were no horses, but there were donkeys! One time they carried all our camera equipment up a mountain in Spain. It was never dull at MTV, whether that be negotiating with the Vatican police, arranging a fire brigade to come to an island off the coast of France to chill the beers when the ice truck went MIA or staging a worldwide awards ceremony; it's in our DNA to think on our feet and find clever and strange ways to solve problems.

The biggest change in your life will be when you choose to move to Australia to work at a media agency called MediaCom. In Australia you will grow personally and professionally, open your heart to all this great country has to offer.

As for MediaCom, they will give you such an overriding sense of adventure, loyalty and most importantly an indispensable level of leadership skills. The one thing you will begin to realise is that seeing beyond what is right in front of you is vital, whether that be through work or people. As a leader, spreadsheets will become 'a thing' you need to do – I don't think we will ever be good at them but keep trying!

Lastly, if I were to give you some final piece of advice it would be that you can do and be anything you want with hard work and self-belief, just like mum and dad always told you. So, listen to them, except when they are telling you to come home at 1 am, that's way too early, the party has just begun!

All the best,

Gemma x



Above: Teenage Gemma, and Gemma today

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