

# T.D. Jakes: 5 Things I Would Tell a Young Me

He's "America's Best Preacher," according to *TIME* magazine; one of *Ebony's* Power 100; and a movie and television presence, not to mention the winner of countless awards, according to his biography. But the man T.D. Jakes is today is not the man he was in his mid-20s.

"During my 58 years, I've occupied several roles. I've been a student, teacher and church leader. I've been an intern, employee and boss. I'm a son, father and grandfather, as well as husband, neighbor and friend. As I approach my sixth decade, I've been thinking a lot about missed opportunities, regret and the hard-scrabble lessons I've learned along the way," the leader of The Potter's House writes in a recent blog post.

If he could rewind the clock 33 years, he knows precisely what he would tell the younger version of himself.

First, he offered insight into finding purpose.

"Let your purpose guide you. Determine your purpose by taking inventory of your interests, strengths and passions. By doing this, you'll avoid cycles of wasted time and energy, your most valuable resources."

Next, the young Jakes is advised to not let others define him.

"Too often, you've allowed your desire for approval to determine your self-worth," the bishop writes. "The yearning to be recognized isn't the problem, it's your inability to see that some people are so embittered by their own disappointments they lack the capacity to nurture the gifts and talents that are starting to blossom in your life. Aim for

self-definition. Don't let other people tell you who you are."

Third, he warns disappointment is inevitable, but suave financial sense can ease the burden.

"Learn to budget, and adhere to your financial plans. Your preparation will not only impact you, but the people you love. Emotional dry spells will also come. Remember, the love you pour into people will be the love you get returned to you. Prepare by loving more," Jakes writes.

Next, Jakes says it's OK to let go of some relationships.

"There are some people you do lunch with and others you do life with. That is to say, not everybody deserves your time," he writes. "There are toxic people whose long-term presence in your life can and will separate you from your destiny. You will know these people by their rotten fruits. Remove them from your life immediately. Save your best for those who deserve it most."

Finally, Jakes advises to let it all out in a laugh.

"Life is serious business, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't laugh along the way. Don't allow unsound dogma to stand in the way of taking joy in all the hilarious moments creation offers. Laughing has curative powers, so find someone to laugh alongside. Joy is contagious, so play a part in spreading it far and wide."

*Do you agree with his advice? What would you add?*