

Franklin Veaux (Quora user) Advice Life Advice 

What advice would Franklin Veaux give to his 25-year-old self?

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Franklin Veaux, I've lived an incredible life and talk about it in my memoir 
The Game Changer

Answered May 13, 2018

Ooh, now there's an interesting question. I very much wish I could go back and give advice to my 25-year-old self. In fact, that might alter the entire trajectory of my life.

What I would say would look something like this:

Franklin! Dude! It's me, Franklin. Yeah, I know, the hair. Started going away when you hit 40. Don't worry about that right now. You have bigger problems.

Look. Dude. You're about to make a mistake that you will regret for the rest of your life.

Ruby[1]. You love her. She loves you. Here's the thing: you're about to start treating her really badly for a really stupid reason. It's surprising how quickly treating someone badly can tear even the most loving relationship with the most committed partner to pieces.

You know how you think you're immune to jealousy? Yeah, about that. You're about to get a life lesson. She's going to start dating someone else, someone who can give her things you can't. You're going to lose your mind.

Hey, it happens. We all feel uncomfortable things from time to time. It's human. Nobody has magical immunity to feeling bad. The lesson you're about to learn is, what you do with those feelings matters.

You're going to blame her for your bad feelings. You're going to lie awake at night searching and searching for ways that you can make your feelings her fault. You're going to accuse her of hypocrisy and gaslighting. You're going to insist that the feelings you're experiencing must be someone else's fault, not yours. You're going to externalize responsibility for your emotions.

You might not understand this yet—it took me years to figure this out—but externalizing blame for the way you feel is going to make those feelings worse, not better

She loves you. If you treat her with dignity and respect, she will probably be with you for the rest of your life. But you're about to blow that, because you're scared. And because you're scared you will lose her, you're about to do things that will guarantee you lose her.

You will act out. You will treat her badly. She will get defensive, naturally. You will treat her defensiveness as proof that your feelings are her fault.

Eventually, you will kick her out of the home you share with her.

And the whole time you're doing this, a little part of you, somewhere deep down inside, will be watching in horror. That small still voice will be saying "Franklin, what the hell are you doing?" That voice will be drowned out by your jealousy and fear; it will not be until after you've destroyed your relationship with her that you will admit to yourself it was even there.

Yes, you will destroy your relationship with her. You will hurt her, and yourself, and you will put a mark on your heart that will never, ever heal. All because you so badly wanted the way you felt to be someone else's responsibility.

It doesn't have to happen.

This will be hard, but you have to take responsibility for your own emotions. It's okay to be vulnerable. It's okay to say "I feel scared, can you reassure me that you still love me?"

What's not okay is mistreating people you love because you're scared of losing them.

There's a certain kind of sad irony to what's about to happen. On some level, you recognize how much she loves you and how good you are together, because even through the worst of it, when you're telling her that this is all her fault, you will believe there is some magic combination of words that will make everything okay again. You don't yet understand that love requires constant renewal, nor the damage unkind accusations can cause.

You will, oh yes, you will.

I hope that by having this conversation with you, I can plant seeds that will let you learn this lesson without destroying something beautiful. Franklin, dude, listen to what I say: This is the most important thing you will ever learn. Please don't make it be the most expensive.

She loves you. The feelings you're feeling, they're not her fault. I know you love her. Now fucking act like it.

[1] Not her real name.