



Letter To My **YOUNGER SELF**

Chris O'Dowd

Each issue we ask a well-known face to write a letter to their younger self. This issue, 40-year-old Co. Roscommon award-winning actor and comedian Chris O'Dowd - best known for stellar performances in *Bridesmaids*, *The IT Crowd* and *How to Build a Girl* writes a compelling letter to his 16-year-old self.

**“Please finish college,
or drama school, or
some f*cking course
you start, so Mam has
something to hang on
the wall”**

Greetings Pelican, you lanky string of pale jelly.

I come bearing good news; your life is going to be fairly interesting!

It seems almost churlish to offer you advice, knowing how rubbish you are at taking it, but I shall endeavour nonetheless to enlighten you with your own experience...

First of all, it's ok that you have no idea what you want to do with your life right now, that will reveal itself soon enough, for better or worse.

You'll squeeze into college next year and leave home. Over the next twenty-odd years, you'll call a few places 'home', but home, as they say, is not a place, but a feeling. So feel it, and cherish it, while you're in it. Life shall move pretty fast from now on, so take a breath big Boyler.

In the next 5 years, you'll walk your sister down the aisle in South Carolina, you'll sleep in a train station on the Turkish border and

briefly run an Irish bar in Paris. All of these things happened because you always said yes, so maybe keep doing that.

If there are a few 'no's' that might be useful to you...

Maybe don't get your eyebrow pierced in Bangkok, it'll get infected. And even if it didn't, it's an eyebrow piercing, so, *ya know*. Maybe don't try the street food in Delhi, it won't be the last you see of it. Be careful crossing the road in Vietnam, those old lads on motorbikes are not messing around.

In 2004, you're going to buy a second-hand laptop off a guy on a street in Soho because you're too broke to afford a new one. You'll spend £300 and when they leave you with the case, you'll discover they switched the laptop for 2 bottles of lemonade. This will be frustrating.

Oh, FYI, a laptop is like a Commodore 64, but smaller, and full of pornography. Oh, and FYI means *'for your information'*.

Your eyes will always be a little too close together, but fortunately your appearance will offer up many other odd features to divert the ridicule. Your nose, for example, will never quite 'grow into your face' as you'd hoped.

You're going to have some success in a career you like, though I'm not going to ruin the surprise of it for you here. Enjoy feeling like an underdog, that sensation will be joyous, but short lived.

Try your best to be honest with people. Remember that being nice and being kind are very different, and one is infinitely more important than the other.

Try and get your cousin Fidelma to go to regular cancer screenings. And Auntie Dee. And tell them both that you love them whenever you see them. And see them more. Actually, text them now. Oh, you don't know what texting is yet, just call them for a chat. It doesn't matter why, just trust me. And Adrian. And Tara. And Fongie and.. just ring everybody, ok? Develop a habit of calling your friends and family regularly. Make it a ritual. Stay in touch with old friends, they'll be the first to let you know if you're losing the run of yourself.

There are some lads in your school right now taking sh*t for being different. Do something about it. Because you can, and you know you should.

Please finish college, or drama school, or some f*cking course you start, so Mam has something to hang on the wall. Here's an odd thing.. that fella that just got your sister pregnant? Turns out he's a smashing lad and they're married now, with 5 kids! Bananas.

You're going to meet Terry Wogan, and Philip Seymour Hoffman, and Gay Byrne! They're all dead now, but your time with them was a delight, so that's something.

Liverpool still haven't won the league. But this is our year!
Roscommon still haven't won the All-Ireland.



“being nice and being kind are very different, and one is infinitely more important than the other”

But this is our year?

I know you've started touching boobs recently and I'm not gonna lie, it never gets old. Oh, speaking of boobs, you're going to be a Dad! Waaaaay later though, this isn't a 'sting'. You're going to love it. You'll be exhausted and live in a constant state of frazzle, but it'll be the absolute best thing you ever do. Apart from that time you chewed a fly on television. And you're going to marry a sexy author, which is good.

The truth is, I have very few concerns for you really. You were born into a loving family and you have your wits about you, so life should be fine. You are privileged, don't forget that. You are supremely fortunate, don't waste that, try your luck man!

Thank your parents.

*See ya soon,
Chris, aged 40.*

*Follow Chris on Twitter @BigBoyley

“Congratulations on the publication of your 250th edition. For 250 issues you have treated your readers with respect and your sellers with dignity. While many of us tread lightly in the misfortune of others, you continue to wade deeply in the hope of lifting people up and out. I wish you hearty congratulations and sincere thanks.” - Chris O'Dowd