

Aimee Napier



It is extremely difficult for me to sum the story of my life and experiences up in a single paragraph or even a short essay. You could easily describe me as the epitome of a non-traditional student. I am a single mother of a twenty year old daughter, a sixteen year old son, a recently diagnosed autistic five year old. I have two adorable grandchildren as well. I have been a student at VSU off and on since the late 1980s when it was Valdosta State College. The campus and university itself have changed so much, but then so have I. I have started and quit more times than I can count – and not just school. Quitting became a habit for me. I developed a defeated mindset at a very early age and failure was the only outcome I expected. I was in a downward spiral with no help in sight. Eventually, I reached the bottom of the bottom. It was the very best thing that ever happened to me. I know its cliché, but there literally was nowhere to go but up. I had been abused as both a child and adult, molested, raped, suicidal, addicted, unemployed, abandoned, and divorced – you name it and I went through it. I was radically saved, even though I had been saved years before. I began doing jail ministry with the women at the local jail at home. I also started back to school and completed, for the first time in my life, something – I got an AA in ministry.

I knew then it was time to finish what I had started so many years ago here at VSU. I started as a biology major, changed to computer science, then went into CIS, couldn't do the math and changed to geology. I loved geology but, again, couldn't do the math. This time, from all my life experiences and doing jail ministry, I knew what I wanted and where I was supposed to be – a sociology major. I applied for financial aid and got an answer within 12 hours that my application had been approved and accepted. I reapplied to VSU, was accepted, and enrolled – all within just a few days of applying for financial aid. I had made the decision and there was no quitting this time. Classes are more difficult than they were in the 1980s or 1990s. I've had to repeat most of my core. I've worked hard to bring my nearly negative GPA up to a 3.3. The first year I was back I worked full time 45 hours a week juggling home, children, online classes and homework. Somehow, through grace and mercy and lots of help from wonderful teachers who understood, supported me and encouraged me, I made it through. The second year, I quit my full time job, started commuting and worked part time on campus. Now I am working full time here at the university, still mentoring women on meth and probation through the probation office in the nearby community, and taking care of my elderly father who has moved in. My baby started Kindergarten too, and I just found out he is autistic.

I am the President of The Zeta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology International Honor Society, the Secretary of the VSU Sociology Club, and a member of Sigma Alpha Pi, The National Society of Leadership and Success. I am a senior sociology major looking to graduate if not Spring 2014 then in Fall 2014. I plan to go straight into the master's of sociology program here at VSU then eventually get a doctoral degree in Public Administration. My desire is to work to change policy in Georgia which negatively affect the poor and middle classes and contribute to class and racial oppression in the south. I would encourage every person who desires change that all it takes is making that first step. The second one and every step after is easier. Eventually it will become easier, no matter how hard the task, to go forward than to go backward. My name is Aimee Napier. I am an overcomer. Valdosta State University has been my support system to get me this far in life. It will be my launching pad.

