

PUBLIC SPEAKING: Round 1 (Speech)

Source: TEDxToronto - Drew Dudley "Leading with Lollipops"

I went to a little school called Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, and on my last day there a girl came up to me and she said,

"I remember the first time that I met you."

And then she told me a story that happened four years earlier. She said,

"On the day before I started University I was in the hotel room with my mom and my dad. And I was so scared and so convinced that I couldn't do this, that I wasn't ready for University that I just burst into tears. And my mom and my dad were amazing. They were like, 'Look, we know you're scared, but let's just go tomorrow, let's go to the first day and if at any point you feel as if you can't do this, that's fine, just tell us, we'll take you home. We love you no matter what.' "

She said,

"And so I went the next day and was standing in line getting ready for registration and I looked around and I just knew I couldn't do it. I knew I wasn't ready, I knew I had to quit."

She said,

"I made that decision, and as soon as I made it, there was this incredible feeling of peace that came over me. And I turned to my mom and my dad to tell them that we needed to go home, and just at that moment you came out of the Student Union building wearing the stupidest hat I have ever seen in my life... and you had a bucket full of lollipops. And you were walking along and you were handing the lollipops out to people in line... And all of a sudden you got to me, and you just stopped. And you stared. It was creepy. And then you looked at the guy next to me, and you smiled, and you reached into your bucket and you pulled out a lollipop and you held it out to him. And you said to him, 'You need to give a lollipop to the [woman] standing next to you.' "

And she said,

“I have never seen anyone get more embarrassed faster in my life. He turned beet-red and wouldn’t even look at me and just kinda held the lollipop out like this.. And I felt so bad for this dude that I took the lollipop and as soon as I did you got this incredibly severe look on your face and you looked at my mom and my dad and you said, ‘Look at that... First day away from home and already she’s taking candy from a stranger!’ ”

And she said,

“Everybody lost it... I don’t know why I’m telling you this, but in that moment when everyone was laughing, I knew that I shouldn’t quit... I haven’t spoken to you once in the four years since that day, but I heard that you were leaving, and I had to come up and tell you that you’ve been an incredibly important person in my life...”

And she walks away...

Here’s the kicker. I don’t remember that. I have no recollection of that moment. And I’ve searched my memory banks because that is funny and I should remember doing it, and I don’t remember it. And that was such an eye-opening transformative moment for me to think that maybe the biggest impact I’ve ever had on anyone’s life, a moment that had a woman walk up to a stranger four years later and say you’ve been an incredibly important person in my life, was a moment I didn’t even remember.

How many of you guys have a lollipop moment? A moment where someone said something or did something that you feel fundamentally made your life better? How many of you have told that person they did it? See, why not? ... [W]e’ve got people who have made our lives better walk[ing] around without knowing it.

And every single one of you has been a catalyst for a lollipop moment. You have made someone’s life better... if you think you haven’t, think about all the hands that didn’t go up when I asked that question. You’re just one of the people that hasn’t been told.