

# Bernadette

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## M A C K

Hey Sally,

#TrueStory according to my aunt. Circa 1980. Buffalo, NY.

Aunt Diane happened upon my neighborhood preschool class as we played outside on the lawn. Without letting me see her, she watched for a while as I orchestrated a game of "Bus" with all my little classmates - arranging them two-by-two on the stairs of the preschool building...flanking either side of a black metal railing. I, of course, was the bus driver, down in front - shouting for everyone to: Take your seats! Sit still! Buckle up! And to get ready for the ride of their lives.

As I revved the engine and started to "go", our teacher spotted our stair-bus shenanigans and ordered us all down at once - playing on the stairs, she reminded, was forbidden. We all scurried out of the "bus" and down from the stairs. Everyone groaned - our exciting adventure had been thwarted. But, being the driver of a magical bus, I knew what I had to do. I waited a few moments and, as soon as Miss Whatshername looked away again, I made my move. I stood before my classmate-passengers, threw my right arm into the air, and cried at the top of my lungs: "Everybody: RIIIIIDE the bus!" Cheers erupted and all the kids made for the stairs to get a seat, once again, on my imaginary bus.

Strangely enough, I actually remember that scene and I'm pretty sure I got into trouble for that little stunt - not following directions, insubordination, inciting a riot, whatever...it had been worth it. I was running the show on those make-believe bus stairs: everyone was on board and I was going to take them somewhere unbelievably cool. I wasn't trying to be uncooperative or naughty (I was a very well-behaved child, dontcha know.) I just truly didn't want my friends to miss out on an epic bus ride. What choice did I have? None.

When I think of that story I can still, 39 years later, recall the feeling of bravery, adventure, and the thrill of leadership. That fire-in-the-belly, consequences-be-damned, no-turning-back bliss that you get when you're on a mission. It's one part fear and nine parts "look the f&\*k out!" It's part of my core state of being. And it's what I'm going for in life. For work, for fun, for love - for all of it.

What's the fiery feeling at your core? What do you wish you were doing, but aren't? What will it take for you to shout your own version of "everybody riiiiide the bus!"?

Keep Up the Good Work,

Bernadette

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