A long time ago, although it seems like just the other day, I was the smartest child there was in Maycomb County, well at least for my grade. Now that I am a lawyer, just like Atticus, I understand all that happened that summer and why Atticus had defended that negro man. Although I was smart then, that didn’t mean I was mature. As a matter of fact I am sure many people in that small town thought I’d never grow up. I eventually matured by Calpurnia’s teachings, Atticus’s talks, and Jem’s examples.

When I was young, I will admit, I was quite the tomboy, but Calpurnia taught me many things like manners and acting more ladylike. Back then people thought maturity was becoming more ladylike and assuming a women’s role. One time in first grade, Walter Cunningham practically asked me to beat him up because he had made me look bad in front of the teacher. At recess I went to find Walter and when I did I beat him up and shoved his face in the dirt. Jem had to pull me off of him and when he did he apologized to Walter and invited him over for dinner. At the dinner table Walter was puttin’ syrup all over his vegetables and meat. I thought he was crazy so I stopped him by asking what the sam hill are you doin’. As soon as I made that remark I remember Calpurnia being furious and asking me to join her in the kitchen. When I got into the kitchen Calpurnia told me, “that boy’s yo’ comp’ny, don’t matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house’s yo’ comp’ny, and don’t you let me catch you remarkin’ on their ways like you was so high and mighty!” (Lee 24) When Calpurnia said this I learned that being warm and welcoming to your guest was important to grow up and mature. I will remember that day the rest of my life. Nowadays I feel bad about what I said to Walter but, it’s too late to apologize now. Later that year I attended Calpurnia’s church with Jem one Sunday. Although at first I wasn’t too happy about it Calpurnia said, “you’re gonna go to First Purchase church with smiles on your faces.” (118) From then on I knew it wasn’t always best to express my feelings. Sometimes you have to put on a happy face and be the bigger person and move on without making a big deal out of small things. This shows that the little things shouldn’t bother you, and you should look at the big picture. These two things assisted me in learning how to become more mature.

In those same years Calpurnia was teaching me her lessons and ideas; Atticus was also instructing me on how to grow up. At the time Atticus would have the talks with me, I never thought he was trying to teach me lessons. I always thought he was just saying what was on his mind. Well, I think it turned out to be a little bit of both. I came home from school one night after getting in a fight with Cecil Jacobs. Cecil had said that Atticus defends niggers. I knew this wasn’t a compliment and I hated when people insulted Atticus. That night when I got home I talked to Atticus and he told me, “ no matter what anyone says to you, don’t let ‘em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change… it’s a good one, even if it does resist learning.”(76) When Atticus told me this I realized fighting wasn’t going to get me anywhere in life and it wasn’t helping anyone. Part of the reason I am a lawyer today is because now I learned to be mature in how to handle conflicts and to fight with my mind in court. During that same conversation I asked Atticus if he was going to win. He said no, so I then asked,” then why-“ (76) The answer he said to me that I will never forget for as long as I live was, “Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win.” (76) That has stuck with me for so many years because it has taught me to always give stuff a try and given me determination to succeed in becoming or achieving whatever I want. I didn’t become a lawyer by giving up, even when people thought I could never achieve this goal.

Now I haven’t told you much about my brother, Jem. I followed his example on everything throughout childhood. If he didn’t do something and said it was not cool or not good, then I wouldn’t do it either. One day Jem and I were walking around looking for squirrels to shoot with our air rifles. Jem started squinting at something down the street. It happened to be old Tim Johnson, Mr. Johnson’s dog, and he didn’t look too good. The dog was hobbling around and looked like he was in pain, so Jem went and got Calpurnia. She then got Atticus and Mr. Heck Tate. I thought Mr. Heck Tate was going to shoot the dog, but he just turned, looked at Atticus, and asked him to do it. Atticus put Tim Johnson out of his misery in one shot. I had never seen Atticus do something like that, so I started talking to Jem about it. I asked Jem if we should ask Atticus about his nickname the sheriff had told us, but he told me no. He said if Atticus wanted us to know he’d tell us. Then he quickly added,” Atticus is real old, but I wouldn’t care if he couldn’t do anything—I wouldn’t care if he couldn’t do a blessed thing.” (99) By Jem saying that I learned not to love Atticus for his talents but to love him for whom he is. I could use the example Jem set and apply with me toward anyone. I learned to like people for the kind of person they are and their talents, not just their talents. Like I told you earlier, Jem and I went to Calpurnia’s church that year. While we were there Reverend Sykes said they were short money and they needed more for Mr. Robinson’s family. Calpurnia offered to pay more, but Jem said, “Naw Cal, we can put ours in. Gimme your dime, Scout.” (122) By Jem offering our dimes instead of Calpurnia he showed me that I needed to take responsibility for myself and begin to follow his example. Jem was more than a brother to me because he helped guide me through so much, and in the end it helped me become a more mature young lady.

When I was younger Calpurnia’s teachings, Atticus’s talks, and Jem’s examples helped bump my maturity level up a great deal. Now that I have kids of my own I try to follow a little bit of Atticus’s, Calpurnia’s, and Jem’s legacy they left with me every day. I want to be the best mother I can and their teachings have put me in the best possible position for that. I tell my kids stories every day of my child hood and what great role models I had. My children can prove people wrong and show them what they’ve got, just like I did by becoming a lawyer and proud graduate from Harvard Law School.