

Waiting for Admissions Letters and Getting In, Wait-listed, Rejected by Barbara Cameron

Description



Here’s another insightful, honest post from our friend Barbara Cameron. This time she writes about the thorny issue of waiting for admissions letters. Then, there’s the rose at the end of the journey—if things go well. We’re wishing all of you the very best of luck as you wait for letters and find out results!”—Christina and Anne

We wait for an online purchase to arrive. We wait in traffic. We wait for our Double Cappuccino extra froth at Starbucks (where I recently saw a woman flip out on the barista because she waited “three minutes and it was all wrong” when she received it). We wait for news from an oncologist about ourselves, or a loved one or a friend when *all wrong* takes on an entirely different meaning. We wait for our babies to be born.

And then, of course, we sometimes [wait for acceptance letters from L.A. private schools](#) to hear where our children will get their education. It is easy to say, “Keep it in perspective, it isn’t a life or death matter,” because it is not. However, seriously hard work, time and effort have gone into this process more times than not. Our children’s education matters a great deal. Expectations are high, and fear can creep in, so how do we handle it?

I had a friend who drove around her neighborhood trying to track down the mailman the day the letters were due to arrive, which some might judge extreme, but if you knew her, you would laugh. That is *her*. She laughs now. Getting a little crazy is okay if that’s what you do. The *Los Angeles Times* famously coined the term [“Black Friday”](#) to describe this day.

For each family dynamic, there is a valid answer to *how do we wait for this news*. My crazy, I tended to play the waiting down, quell the anxiety by telling myself *whatever happens it happens the way it is meant to happen*. Whatever works; it’s a trick of the mind. I created options so I could remain faithful to my mantra. Some families are clear about their few choices and bet on that. These days, parents frantically check their email or log onto sites which schools posts acceptances. Check your email’s junk mail folder too because I’ve heard that’s where some of these admissions emails end up.

I guess the one real thing to take away: in many ways, it is a crapshoot. It’s a roll of the dice no matter that you may have the odds in your favor. The best way to prepare yourself and your children, is to ready them to handle whatever happens, which means you as a parent must control it. Lead by example.

We waited before kindergarten, were **accepted to The Willows**, our first choice, **wait-listed at PS1, got rejected from The Center for Early Education**, and, well, case in point, I can’t even remember the rest now. Of course, I signed the contract for The Willows instantly. As for high school, we did as we were told because we needed financial aid; we threw our net wide. *Seven schools, applications, interviews, tours! Seven letters to await*. Crapshoot: one school we thought he had a good chance, a no-go. The school we thought was out of his league was a yes, and wait-listed at one he liked very much. Fairly last minute, my son did a shadow day at [Arête](#) and fell in love with it. They accepted him; two very different schools. I remember conversations with family and friends, what to do? On the last day to decide, driving to work, debating which would be *best* for him, after receiving generous financial aid from both, I just made a decision, knowing we can never, in the end, know the answer to that question. Arête, I still believe, was the best choice!

Maybe all of this means remembering that we are always in the process of waiting for something; waiting is hard. Traffic can make us late to an important meeting. If we crave and look forward to our morning caffeine, waiting for it might seem impossible if the line is long. Some news we think will change our lives, and some possibly will; some may not, although we *feel* (as the Cappuccino women felt) it will.

Maybe teach your kids, the degree of importance varies, but waiting is a part of life. It never stops. The outcome of hard work, whatever it may be, is a part of life. Whatever happens, we deal with it and move on. There is no other choice. How we handle what we receive after the wait is “and will” become a part of who we are.

Barbara Cameron is the 2012 winner of the American Literary Review nonfiction contest, judged by Alice Elliot Dark, and her winning essay, "Hawk Blood," was published in the journal. It was republished in the Colorado Review as an editor's pick. Her essay, "In Avalon, She Fell," was a finalist in a 2017 literary contest, judged by Abigail Thomas. She has studied with Mary Gaitskill and with Tom Jenks, founder and co-editor of Narrative. Barbara is a graduate of Barnard College, a former restaurant server and now manager, a single mom by choice and a resident of Los Angeles. You can read Barbara's most recent essay about [Financial Aid on Beyond The Brochure](#) and her creative nonfiction in [Angels Flight Literary West](#).

Check out Beyond The Brochure's [previous posts about admissions letters, wait-lists and rejections](#) and here on [The Daily Truffle](#).

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Good luck to everyone!

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