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So what is it like to be a Big Sister?

Hi – my name is Lisa and I will do my very best to represent all of the Big Sisters in sharing with you something about our experiences and what it has meant to be a Big Sister.

So, the beginning. What did we all feel like as Big Sisters when we stood on the 16th of April waiting to meet our little sisters? Nerves? Excitement? Anticipation? Ready to take on the world – or at least a teenage girl – how hard could it be, right? Truth be told we all felt all of these emotions at some point – on that day and throughout the past few months. It is fair to say it has been a little like a roller coaster – some highs and lows, some scary moments but in the end, all worth it... some of us keep coming back for more.

So what is it like to be a Big Sister? When I asked the Big Sisters to give me one word to describe their experiences this year they came back with:

inspiring, uplifting,
rewarding, meaningful,
grounding,

and my favourite, salted caramel ice cream!

So whilst we may have felt like we have been on a rollercoaster, we all know that we are walking away with an experience of a lifetime.

The key part of that experience has been the relationships we have built – with each other, our coaches, Jess, Marnie, Linda but most importantly our Little Sisters.

Like any relationship the “getting to know you” stage is not always easy! I read a quote the other day that I thought was applicable to the relationship between a big and little sister. It said:

“Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.”

As big sisters we have had to learn to stand back and put the needs of our little sisters first. To let them set the pace (even if a snail could move faster!). To let them walk ahead of us when they need to but know they are never alone.



We have had to find the balance of saying too much or not enough. We have had to know when to say yes and when to say no; to know when to listen and not speak (not always so easy!); to know when to push and when to leave well enough alone.

We have learnt to have no expectations. Nothing will be what you expect it to be or happen like you expect it to happen. If there is one thing I have learnt in the 2 years I have been a Big Sister it is that nothing goes to plan. You will laugh and cry a lot but you cannot predict when or which you will do more of or why.

We have become masters of Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat & Messenger . We have learnt to type and talk with acronyms and imogies. We have surfed, cooked, trapezed, gone on rollercoasters, literally, danced, sang and tried sports I never thought I would!

We have sat quietly & held our Little Sisters hands as they have faced some of their biggest fears or demons and felt helpless as we know this is their journey and one they, and they alone, have to walk through in order to heal and grow.

We have tried to be a support in the best way we can – by making sure the girls know we are here when they need us. It has not always been easy. They don't pick up when we call, they run out of airtime, they don't return messages or they forget it is an outing that weekend.

That's ok - we aren't going anywhere.

Nurturing a relationship takes time.

It takes time to know that someone will always be there for you - no matter what is said or done to try and push them away

It takes time to build trust – it is tested and pushed before it is accepted

It takes time to open yourself up to be loved by someone you have only just met

It takes time and effort to get to know each other – your likes & dislikes; what makes you laugh or cry,

It takes time to know that when your Big Sister says she will do something she really will It takes time to know that if there is one other person in this world that you can rely on –

always- it is the woman sitting next to you.

It has been a privilege to get to know each of the little sisters who have each grown in confidence over these past months. I truly hope you take that with you into everything you do.

To my little sister Ebony – what can I say? I have learnt from your beautiful spirit, quick smile and loving nature. It is my hope that our relationship will grow with every year and I look forward to watching you discover what you want to do and who you want to be.

It has been a privilege to meet and get to know the beautiful Big Sisters. It takes something special to be a Big Sister – to give not just your time but also yourself. I have seen each give the girls a part of their heart and I truly hope they acknowledge what a gift that is. We are all here for different reasons but the one thing that binds us is the belief that every girl or woman deserves to love & respect herself and believe in herself. What each of you have done for your little sisters is to take her one step closer to that.

Lastly, none of us would be here if it weren't for the extraordinary women who make all of this possible - Jessica, Marnee, Linda, Louise, LeeAnne and Jane. We all thank you for your vision, commitment and tireless efforts to make the cogs move so smoothly for each and every outing and for each one of us. We are truly blessed to know you and be a part of this wonderful family you have created.

Lisa - Big Sister