

matters of life & **beth**by **Beth Daigle**  
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# Invest in Yourself

**P**ersonal growth and development are important. Whether you're setting aside time to do more reading or returning to school to change careers, you're making yourself a priority, and that's a good thing. It's not always easy to do — especially when a financial investment is involved. When I completed my undergraduate and graduate degrees, I saw that as the end of any major cash outlays toward my education or career advancement. And that's the way it played out until recently, when I concluded that there were more things I wanted to accomplish.

Now that my daughters are teenagers and I no longer desire the business career that I studied for in college, I've decided that I need to nurture and build a new me. I've watched several friends return to school to become teachers or massage therapists, I've seen friends turn their lives upside down to start new businesses, and I've seen established businesswomen spend money on continuing education, conferences and brand-building opportunities.

I've marveled at their confidence, but questioned whether I'd be brave enough to put that kind of money, not to mention time and energy, into myself. I feared not knowing whether the investment would pay off.

Over the past several years, I have been working on a book about a family trip I took to Greece, Italy and Turkey. I have enjoyed the writing process, but eventually found myself at a stopping point. I thought it might help to attend a writers conference, which was not cheap, but a manageable expense. I was glad I did it and felt I got a lot out of it, but I soon realized that I needed the help of a professional if I wanted to make my book publishable. I justified the cost by recognizing that, if nothing else, it would make me a better writer. I was again happy to have made the commitment. Next, it was suggested that I start a blog to build a following for the book. I liked the idea, but if I was going to do this, I wanted to do it right and have a Web designer create a polished, good-looking site. Little by little, I found myself spending more money. The financial investments had me worried. I kept thinking, was it worth it?

I determined that if I answered anything but Yes! Of course it's worth it, I would be selling myself horribly short. I considered what I've paid for gym memberships, hair appointments and home improvements over the years and realized that it was time to reprioritize some spending toward the goals I now hoped to achieve. I admit that I was reluctant, unsure and slightly afraid of the work required to ensure a return on all of my investments.

I gave myself time, because rushing into anything is never a good idea. I determined all of my costs, set aside enough money to cover them and found the right people to help me achieve my objectives. I'm now working with an editor for my book and making great progress. I have a new blog called 3 Olives & a Twist (visit me there: [3OlivesandATwist.com](http://3OlivesandATwist.com)) and I'm more energized and enthusiastic about my personal future than I've been since having my first child 15 years ago.

If you're thinking about changing the course of your life, stop thinking and do it — or at least give it serious consideration. Take your time and devise a well-thought-out plan. Whether you succeed or fail, you'll have taken an important step forward in developing the most important person in your life — YOU.

