Good-Bye to the "Good Ole Days"

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Seminar: Personal Lives
[Assignment: Narrate an incident or experience from your past that taught you an important lesson or had a significant impact on your life. Select an experience that is vivid in your memory bringing the "characters" to life with descriptive detail to help the reader visualize what it is you are describing.]

(1) Excitement grew inside me as I drove to the coast. This was going to be a great weekend. I was going to visit my old friend from high school, whom I had not seen since graduation the previous year. Since then she had gained a husband and a baby. I could not wait to see her and meet her family. It would be like the "good ole days." We were an inseparable pair--always doing something crazy. As I drove, I began to reminisce about some of the silly things we had done in high school. Once, we made a dance video, dancing like Madonna to "Conga." Another time we tried to dye our hair black but Amy's didn't work out quite right; she was stuck with gray hair for three days. I laughed out loud as I thought about it. I could not wait to be reunited with my old buddy Amy Moppet.

(2) When I arrived, Amy came bouncing out the door to greet me. We exchanged the usual "you look great" compliments, but I am ashamed to admit that I was not being sincere with mine. She had gained weight from the pregnancy and she looked drawn and weak. Because it had only been one month since the baby was born, I understood that she was still recovering from her difficult pregnancy, but it was sad to see my bright and energetic friend so tired and weak.

(3) Amy quickly beckoned me into the house. When I walked in, the first thing that caught my eye was Parents magazine lying on the coffee table. The fact that it belonged to Amy seemed ironic. I followed Amy across the room to the automatic baby swing. There she introduced me to her new baby boy, who was swinging back and forth in peaceful sleep. At this point, I could not imagine a more gratifying possession. After my oo's and ah's over her perfectly angelic child, Amy and I sat down at the kitchen table. We soon found ourselves engaged in a conversation about the "good ole days." As we talked, the clicking of the baby's swing made me feel oddly intimidated. Amy and I laughed as we recalled some of the crazy adventures we'd had in high school. Our eyes grew wide and our mouths fell agape as we remembered the party where the host's bed had caught on fire. We also snickered about the time Amy had poured a gallon of chocolate milk over my head at a party. We used to talk and laugh like this for hours. Things were almost like they used to be. However, something was vaguely different.
Suddenly the baby became vividly aware of his hunger. It seemed as though the volume of his cries knew no limits. Without even bothering to finish her sentence, Amy stopped talking. Our conversation came to an abrupt halt as Amy rose to tend to her infant. While Amy prepared his formula, the baby continued his ruthless cries. I resented the baby's demanding cries because he had interrupted an enjoyable conversation. At last, silence returned as Amy plugged the baby's sobs with the bottle. For the first time, I became aware of the responsibilities this baby imposed.

Immediately after we had situated the baby back in his swing and resumed our conversation, Amy's husband came home. This was Amy's cue to begin preparing dinner. Out of a sense of obligation, I offered to help. Of course, Amy knew how foreign I felt when I was in a kitchen. She used to feel that way too. We both used to laugh at the idea of actually cooking our own meals. If we were hungry, we would either toss something in the microwave or order a pizza. I was amazed as I watched her skillfully prepare chicken and dumplings. After all, we used to wonder what "dumplings" really were. The dinner Amy prepared was as delicious as the aroma had predicted. I was both astonished and impressed by Amy's new homemaking talents.

The conversation at the dinner table seemed a bit unusual; so foreign yet so familiar. First Amy and her husband discussed his day at work. As he shared the pros and cons of his day, the high school gossip that used to dominate our conversations began to seem childish. When Amy began to talk about what was on sale at the grocery store, I suddenly began to realize that I felt as if I were listening to my parents talk. Amy was conforming. I was stunned as I realized that Amy's interests were changing to match her new lifestyle.

Later that night, after I had retired to the guest room, I heard an argument beginning on the other side of the wall. It seemed silly at first. Amy accused her husband of forgetting to take out the trash for the third time that week. He tried to resolve the problem with an apology and a guarantee that it would not happen again, but Amy insisted on arguing. The argument grew more and more intense. Finally, Amy's husband grew weary of the fight and left the house, slamming the door behind him.

I heard Amy begin to sob uncontrollably. I felt for her but I did not know what to do. We had always been there for each other, but I was hesitant to go and soothe her. After that day, my sympathy for her had diminished. I felt as though she had abandoned me by changing so much. I did not go to her.
(9) The rest of the weekend continued in the same manner. I felt alienated from Amy, who had once been closer to me than anyone else. I used to think I knew everything about her, but I suddenly felt as though I knew nothing.

(10) When I finally drove away from Amy's house, after a long and revealing weekend, I took with me a feeling of loss. I had lost Amy Moppet, my high school buddy. She had been inadequately replaced by Amy Thrallman, wife and mother. I had lost my best friend to a new way of life. That scared me. After all, if it could happen to her, it could happen to me. I felt as if I had witnessed my own destiny, that it was only a matter of time before Amy's new life would be my new life. The thought that I would have the responsibilities of starting a family one day was a stunning and frightening revelation.