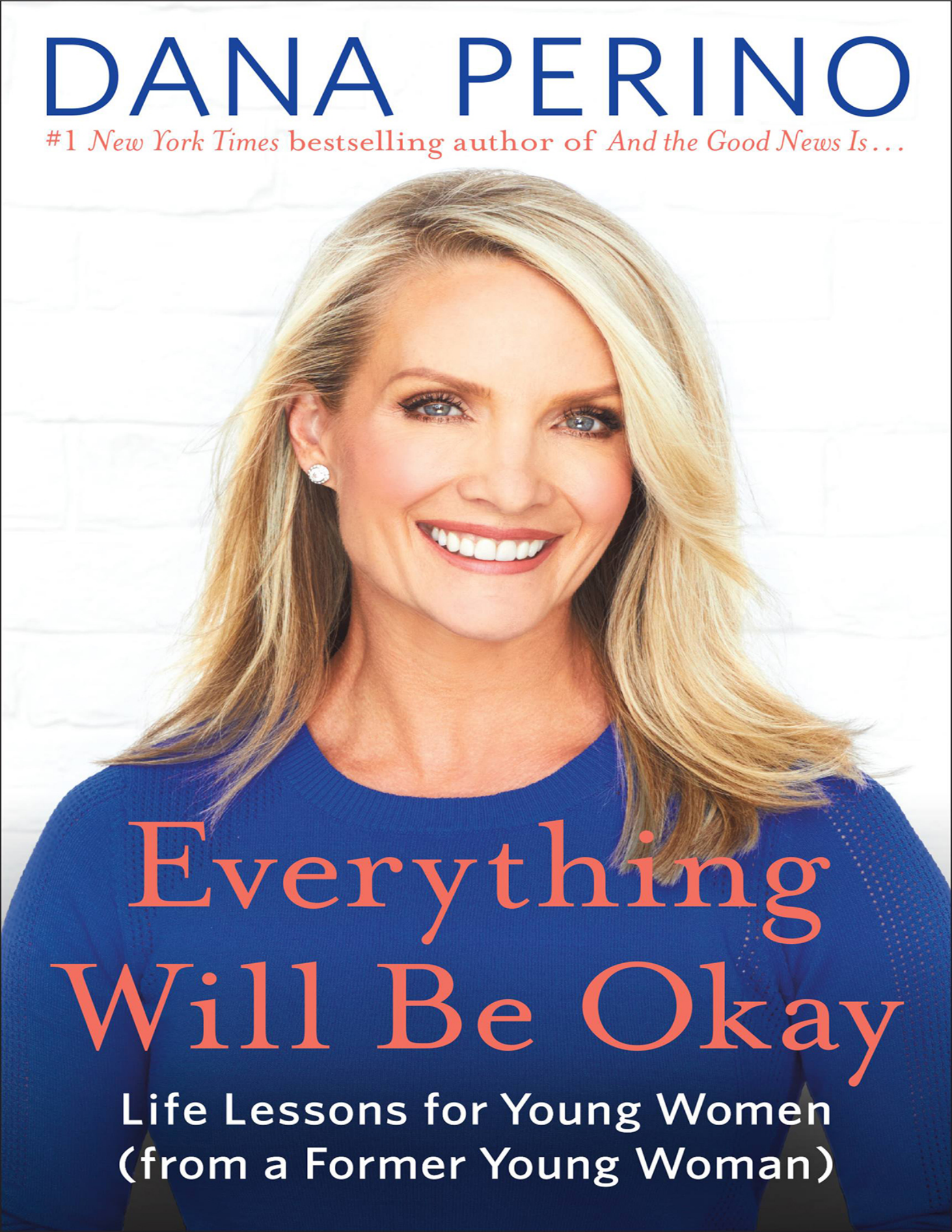


DANA PERINO

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *And the Good News Is...*



Everything Will Be Okay

Life Lessons for Young Women
(from a Former Young Woman)

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Dana Perino



T W E L V E

New York Boston

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Contents

[*Cover*](#)

[*Title Page*](#)

[*Copyright*](#)

[*Dedication*](#)

[*Introduction*](#)

[*Chapter 1: What Are We Doing Here?*](#)

[*Chapter 2: Who Is Dana Perino Anyway?*](#)

[*Chapter 3: What Is the Biggest Problem You're Trying to Solve?*](#)

[*Chapter 4: How Do You Find a Role Model?*](#)

[*Chapter 5: How Can You Improve Your Workday?*](#)

[*Chapter 6: How Do You Take Your Career to the Next Level?*](#)

[*Chapter 7: Serenity: How Can You Detox, Recover, and Find Peace?*](#)

[*Epilogue*](#)

[*Acknowledgments*](#)

[*Discover More*](#)

[*About the Author*](#)

[*Also by Dana Perino*](#)

*For my mom, Janice M. Perino, the first to tell me that
everything will be okay.*

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Introduction

I got a call from a young woman in Washington DC seeking some advice. She had a problem at work and was quite upset. Her office supervisor wanted her to do something that she was very uncomfortable with—make a public statement under her own name using language and a tone that she thought was disrespectful and unproductive.

“Then don’t say it. Absolutely *do not* do it,” I said.

“I don’t think I can refuse,” she said. She was afraid she’d be fired if she didn’t comply, that she didn’t have the gravitas to decline. “I’m not Dana Perino,” she said.

“Well, how do you think I became Dana Perino?” I asked.

I’d had times in my career when I’d faced the same problem. I knew that pit of worry and fear that can make you nearly sick to your stomach when you think you’re trapped or stuck (you’re not!).

I suggested she rewrite the statement in her own words—if her name was going on it, then she had to take ownership of the opportunity.

You see, while she was worried that she was going to lose her job or be pushed aside, hurting her career plans, I had an alternative view—that if she didn’t stick up for herself and do the right thing, the experience would chip away at her confidence and could hurt her career in a different way in the long run.

I told her that personal integrity is her *most valuable asset*—she had to fiercely protect it. And that suggesting the changes to the statement with dignity and grace would make her stronger the next time she confronted a challenge.

And the good news is... she rewrote the points in a way that made her feel comfortable *and* that satisfied her boss. Win-win.

Now—let’s do you.

CHAPTER 1



What Are We Doing Here?

The hardest part of any workout is the first step out the door—but if you make it to the gym, you’re always glad you did.

It’s the same with opening a book of advice.

So, congratulations! You made it to page 1.

I promise this will be worth your time (and you won’t have to break a sweat!).

Ever since the spring of 2015 when I wrote *And the Good News Is... Lessons and Advice from the Bright Side*, the mentoring chapter is the one I am most often asked about when talking with young women.

I still get emails about my suggestion to stop wearing UGGs to work (and other tips for professional attire), that young women shouldn’t shuffle around the office, seeming to be barely interested in their work. (*Pick up your feet!*)

I’m often credited for helping readers break the habit of overusing exclamation points(!!!)—doing so causes unnecessary panic and doesn’t present an “I can handle this” image.

The advice on bigger-picture issues helped my readers, too—such as, not being afraid to move to a new town for work or other opportunities. And that choosing to be loved is not a career-limiting decision (and sometimes you should move *for* love... but maybe not after one date).

Oh, and this one was memorable, too: Find your strong voice—and then use it wisely.

I’m grateful that my advice has apparently been helpful to quite a few people. That mentoring chapter packed a punch. And it was just a slice of

the conversations I've had with and stories I've heard from so many young women who I've tried to help during the first phase of their careers.

Those early years are when you get your first job and love going to work every day. Then suddenly you grow out of that first position and can't wait to get on to your next role.

That's also when you're trying to decide what direction to go in and whether you even want to be in a particular industry or follow a certain profession. You may start questioning your choices from college—what you majored in may have been interesting but it may not have been a good choice for helping you reach your financial goals (yes, Dad, I know—I should have taken more business courses!).

Those early career days are when you start asking yourself, When should I leave a job? How do I move on without burning a bridge? How can the next move get me closer to achieving long-term goals?

You might notice that young men your age seem to get promoted sooner than young women—you think that's unfair but are unsure how to deal with it (trust me—taking up smoking cigars, going out for beers, or buying expensive golf clubs to try to fit in with them is *not* the answer).

The first few years can be exciting and fun, while also being confusing and difficult. Hey, they call it work for a reason.

And soon enough, you're making the transition from your first job to your second or third job. That's when—hopefully—everything starts falling into place. But that's also when the decisions you make begin to carry a lot more weight. The stakes are raised.

In your mid to late twenties, you gain more responsibility and you work much longer hours. It's also when you're trying to be taken more seriously and you may have to fight to be in the room for important meetings. You're not the boss yet—but you're also not a junior staffer anymore. You're expected to get results and earn your keep. The pressure builds.

And all of this is going on while you're trying to have an enjoyable personal life as well. You might be getting pressure from family or friends for working too much. You're wondering when you're going to meet a stable, responsible, goal-oriented, and attractive life partner who makes you laugh like crazy. You want to get a dog (but don't do it yet!). You want it all—and quickly. But you realize it is not happening as you imagined it would.

Your thoughts race. I'm even typing faster now.

How do I know what you're thinking?

Because not so long ago, I *was* you. I went through all of this. I made mistakes along the way—many, in fact. I wish I had this book when I was first starting out.

That said, everything turned out well. (I even got the dog.)

And here's what I want you to know. You're not alone in thinking or feeling the way you do. There are millions of young women in your age group that are trying to figure it out. Sometimes knowing that you aren't the only one with these worries can help. No—you're not crazy.

And I'm here to tell you there are ways to push through this period and come out happier and more fulfilled on the other side. There is no magic formula—if it were that simple, everyone would know what to do. But there are some basic—and important—things every young woman facing these decisions should know.

So why learn the hard way? As the book's subtitle says, I'm a former young woman myself. I've already made the mistakes. I've been through it.

Let me tell you what I learned:

I've always found career decision making fascinating, and I have an open door for young professionals who come to me for advice. (Guys come see me, too! A lot of this advice applies to everyone.) I try to help them feel better when they're leaving my office than when they entered. It almost always works.

But over the last couple of years, I've noticed something that's really started to bother me: the quarter-life crisis (that's age twenty-five or so) that I wrote about in 2015 is following young women well into their thirties and beyond.

This is how it usually goes: You've moved up from your first job, but you're not quite at the level you think you should be in terms of stature or compensation. You feel like you've done everything right. Your reviews from your supervisors are solid. You've brought a few good projects over the finish line. You don't wear UGGs to meetings or file your nails in the lunchroom. You're ready for your next step, but there's no position available that fits the moment.

You're facing an achievement gap—jobs you'd like to have require five to seven years of experience and you only have four. As a result, your résumé gets shuffled to the bottom of the pile. Your CV has the boss's

coffee rings on it. It's sitting on her desk under three years of J.McLaughlin catalogues.

Meantime, you thought you'd have a house or family by now. Finding a life partner and having children feels very far off or even unreachable. Instead of feeling like you have momentum, you feel stuck. The most interesting thing in your life is a new Netflix series about some nut who lives with tigers. Nothing is turning out the way that you imagined it would. Dashed dreams fuel anxiety. Deep breaths and restful nights are harder to come by. While you try to maintain a positive attitude, you feel the pressure of time. Ticktock, ticktock.

Every day, the calendar reminds you that you're behind where you want to be or in comparison to your friends and peers (who, by the way, are having similar thoughts no matter what they say). You want to make a change, to be considered someone capable of doing more at the office, someone who would make a wonderful boss, a terrific wife, an amazing mother, and maybe even run for office one day. Or at least run an office one day. But everything feels on hold.

My concern: the temporary crisis threatens to settle into a way of life. And I'm alarmed you are so consumed by your worries that it's coming across as a lack of confidence and preventing you from living a joyful life. You want to pull the rip cord on your angst, but you're afraid that if you stop worrying, you won't achieve your goals. With this pattern, you'll never break out of the negative cycle.

Here's some good news: it doesn't have to be this way. This is a problem that can be solved. There are things you can do to break out of quarter-life-crisis mode.

There has never been a better time to be a young, educated woman in America. Being born in the United States means you've already won the lottery of life.

Let me tell you a story about how important and valuable your education is.

Several years ago, a friend of mine married a great guy: handsome, mature, funny—and an *actual* nuclear physicist! They wanted to try to adopt a child. Soon after the wedding, they signed up with an adoption agency, prayed that a baby would become a part of their lives, and waited for a call.

A few years went by and the phone didn't ring too much. They started to think it might not happen.

But before they lost hope, they tried one other adoption agency.

Fast-forward a few weeks. I'd called her to ask if she could participate in a mentoring event I was going to co-host in DC. She sounded rushed on the phone.

"I'd love to, but I'm frantically buying plane tickets to Florida. We've been chosen to adopt a baby. The mother is in labor, so we have to hurry," she said.

Hang up. Pack. Run to the airport. Fly. Experience a miracle. Become a mother.

Blessings abounded. The baby girl was healthy and the adoption was going smoothly. Still, the biological parents had ten days to change their minds and keep their child.

But they didn't. Instead, they suggested the two couples have dinner before they said good-bye. My friend's parents, who lived in Florida, volunteered to watch over their new granddaughter that evening. As they headed to the dinner, they were nervous. What would they talk about? How would it go? Would it be okay? They weren't sure they could fully express their gratitude.

Over the meal, my friend's husband asked the biological father, "What made you choose us?"

The answer: education.

The father said he watched the video my friends had made for the adoption agency a few times. In it, they showed their home, the neighborhood parks, and their favorite place to walk on Saturdays to get fresh fruit, vegetables, and flowers. Lots of the videos from other prospective parents were similar.

But there was something in their video that stood out from the others he'd seen.

Toward the end of it, my friend's husband said into the camera, "And we will do everything we can to send her to college."

And that was it.

"I realized that I could never send her to college. And that will make such a difference for her," he said.

College—think about what that meant to them and what they were

willing to do to ensure their daughter could get the education she needed to succeed in life.

Now, I'm not saying everyone needs to go to college; there are lots of different paths for people to take in life—that's true. And many of today's collegiate paths lead to some pretty, um, odd places. (Try avoiding a major in Bigfoot studies.) But everyone needs to be educated in order to succeed. And by far, college attendance correlates to increased opportunity and more wealth accumulated over a lifetime.

Consider this—according to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, someone earning a bachelor's degree will be worth more than \$2.8 million on average over a lifetime. And they'll earn 31 percent more than people who get an associate degree, and 84 percent more than people graduating from high school with no additional education. This is why so many parents want their children to go to college. (That doesn't mean it has to be Ivy League—hey, look at me... no Ivy here! Only go to an Ivy League school if you can afford it and want to major in comedy writing. Their sports teams will give you all the material you need. My colleague Greg Gutfeld did this, but they made him the mascot. That's where he got those sweaters he wears on *The Five*.)

In the chapters ahead, you'll find practical advice that you can immediately use to improve your day-to-day work experience. I'll give you some tips taken from my own time as a young staffer to my time now as an observer of younger people, lurking in windows and storefronts as I do on the occasional windswept evening.

Think of me as your manager and your mentor, representative of the Generation X bosses out there. In time, you'll be the top dog, but until then, these pointers can immediately help you at work.

We'll also tackle how to answer some of the biggest questions you have, providing new ways to look at your career and your life. (Trust me—you're not the first person who wondered if leaving a sushi roll in her cubicle desk drawer for two weeks could be career ending. I assure you it could.)

And we'll talk about relationships and the important things you can do to build upon love and commitment—and finding someone to share all of it with—because in a few years (or right this minute!) you'll very much want that. Especially after a couple of Aperol Spritzes and a Ryan Gosling double feature.

I don't have all the answers, but here's some good news: you already have the solutions to the problems you're trying to solve. You already have everything you need. It's all inside of you, waiting to be tapped. All I'm going to do is help you turn on the spigot. And yeah, that's a gross metaphor. But who cares? We'll be going through it together.

You've got this.

CHAPTER 2



Who Is Dana Perino Anyway?

For many of you, this might be the first time you're ever hearing of me or reading something I wrote. You may have been given this book by someone who loves you—a parent or grandparent, an aunt or uncle, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or maybe even a boss or mentor. I imagine if you aren't into politics or don't watch cable news, you may have no idea who I am. Therefore, you may be wondering, Why in the world should I read a book of advice by Dana Perino?

Allow me to introduce myself. I'll make this relatively quick—but the story of my life and career path will give you a better sense of who I am. And I'll provide some of the key foundational advice that I learned along the way.

So:

Today I anchor *The Daily Briefing with Dana Perino* on Fox News Channel, and I'm a co-host on the panel show *The Five*. I'm grateful to be on the election coverage team, to have had a podcast with my co-host Chris Stirewalt called *I'll Tell You What*, and to host *Dana Perino's Book Club* on Fox Nation.

I'm married to a British-born now American citizen, Peter McMahon (much more on this guy in a bit). Yet one of the reasons many people follow me is because they love my dog, Jasper. He's a Hungarian vizsla, the second of that breed Peter and I have raised. Years ago, on a show called *Red Eye*, I said I'd share my dog with everyone and nicknamed him "Jasper, America's Dog." Ever since, Jasper has had his own fan club and sometimes people stop us just to get a photo with him. (I'm not jealous...)

So, with a supportive husband in Peter and a loyal companion in Jasper, I find myself at forty-eight, doing everything I ever wanted to do in a career—it just took me a while and a circuitous route to get here.

Along the way, I had the best opportunity of my life—to be the first woman to serve as the White House press secretary in a Republican administration.

It all began in Wyoming (go Cowgirls!). I might be the only person you've ever “met” that came from the Equality State (so named because it was the first to grant women the right to vote in 1869).

My mom, Janice Marie Brooks, grew up in Rawlins, Wyoming (a small, dusty, and windy town with a strong neighborly feel). If you ever drive across the country, you'll likely take I-80 and go right through it. My mom's parents were entrepreneurs and ran the Uptown Motel when I was a kid.

My grandfather, Thomas R. Brooks, served in the army in Europe during World War II. My grandmother Dorothy “Dot” H. Brooks was a riveter in Denver (she even looked like Rosie). They married as soon as he got home from the war, and they honeymooned by road-tripping to Niagara Falls. My mom was the firstborn, and her little sister is my aunt Patty Sue Schuler (APS for short).

Growing up, my sister and I spent time with my grandmother after my grandfather died. I loved her homemade meals—pot roasts, potatoes and carrots, and cherry pies. She let us pick the marshmallows out of the Lucky Charms box of cereal. We could paint our nails garish colors. She had Jergens rose lotion in her bathroom and White Shoulders perfume on her dressing table.

We played a lot of card games, and she taught us to knock when our turn was over. We watched *Wheel of Fortune* as we sat in her big recliners, and when the news came on, she'd often say, “That Ronald Reagan sure does have a beautiful head of hair.”

My dad, Leo Earnst Perino, was born in Rapid City, South Dakota—about eighty miles east of my grandparents' ranch in Newcastle, Wyoming. My great-grandparents emigrated from Italy, made their way to Wyoming, and homesteaded there in the Black Hills in the late 1800s. Over time, the ranch grew to be quite a large outfit and my uncle Matt Perino, his wife, Donna, and their sons and grandkids run it today.

I spent every summer and most holidays up there at the ranch. It is, by far, the place of my happiest childhood memories. It's where I learned the things that really matter—the importance of faith, family, character, honesty, patriotism, hard work, and fun.

It's also where I learned to bottle-feed a calf, ride a horse (starting with the pony my grandfather got me when I was a toddler—Sally), watch out for snakes, pick eggs, and enjoy a ride in the back of a pickup truck with the dogs as our pals. I came to appreciate fresh air, pine trees, rain after a dry spell, fresh tomatoes and cucumbers, and my grandfather's salad dressing of white vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper, paprika, and a little bit of sugar. I don't get back to the ranch often enough, and I'm grateful they welcome me with open arms whenever I can visit. In many ways and in certain moods or moments, this is who I feel I really am—a cowgirl who “went east.”

My parents moved to Denver, Colorado, when I was just over two years old. We lived in a small three-bedroom house. My sister, Angie, arrived two years later. While I was apparently very upset that I was kept home from school the day she was born, I came to adore her, and to this day she's my very best friend. We had a dog named Joco and a few cats along the way. (I still cringe when I think of my dad finding out we'd snuck home a kitten from the ranch one summer. He threatened not to let us keep her, but she got to stay, thankfully. We're sorry about that, Dad!)

For our early education, we walked to Ellis Elementary School (go Roadrunners!), and then we moved out to a more rural area, Parker, now a gigantic suburb that I barely recognize. They still have the old Pizza Hut, though, and I have fond memories of nights when my parents surprised us and said, “Let's go out tonight,” and we'd get to go have dinner and play Pac-Man and Asteroids until the food arrived. Parker Junior High and Ponderosa High School were laid out so that you could see the Rocky Mountains and marvel that you got to live in that beautiful setting. I was on the speech team and the student council.

My sister and I had happy childhoods. We were loved and cared for. We had a lot of friends. And my parents worked hard to ensure we had good educations. My mom helped nurture us along the way, making sure we could take care of ourselves while knowing she was there if we needed her. She was a great role model.

Lesson alert #1: READ all you can and all the time

Education started at home. I learned to read early on, and my mom would struggle to keep me in books. I would read two library books in the back seat of the car by the time we got home—and we could only check out seven books at a time. So, I would just read them over and over again.

One time when we went to Target, my parents let me stay in the book section while they did the shopping. When they came to get me, I'd already read *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great* by Judy Blume. I asked if we still had to buy it. My parents said yes, we did. With their example of making sure authors get paid for their work, I still buy books and subscribe to multiple news outlets.

I can point to one specific thing my dad did with me that helped me have the career I have today. When I was in third grade, he assigned me to read the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Denver Post* every day before he got home from work (I loved assignments!). I had to choose two articles to discuss with him before dinner. He would ask me lots of questions about why I made my selections, what I thought of the stories, and then he'd debate other points of view that should be considered. Of all the things that helped in the communications business, this was probably the most important. For those of you who are contemplating (or experiencing!) parenthood, I'd say it's something worth considering—even in our digital age.

We were a newsy family. We got all the magazines and my dad and I would dog-ear pages and circle articles we wanted to discuss with each other later. As a family, we always watched the evening news and my parents set the alarm clock on the stove on Sunday evenings, because I had to come in from playing in the backyard in time for *60 Minutes* (what we could have done with a DVR in those days!). When I was asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I would say, "News anchor." I never wavered on that. It was my plan.

Fast-forward. After getting good grades in high school and competing on the forensics team (speech and debate, not *Law & Order / CSI*), I took my dad's advice and applied to a smaller school over the big one I wanted to go to (you know, the kind with the football team, the sororities, and the