

Cliff Notes from Your Mother as You Leave Home

If it starts to spark, remove it.

The bigger mistake is not asking.

Don't wait too long to get started.

Drop every expectation that does not belong to you

Always poke it first to see if it moves.

Sometimes the only method is inexperience.

Above all, be kind. No – be true to yourself. Also, kind.

If you're going to nap on the sofa, for heaven's sake tuck your glasses underneath it so you won't step on them when you get up.

Figure out for what you would walk through fire.

Walk through fire.

Marg Walker

from *Sitting in Lawn Chairs After a Complicated Day*

Copyright © 2020 Margaret Walker.

Used with permission.

duration: 3:30

Poet Marg Walker wrote *Cliff Notes from Your Mother as You Leave Home* five years ago in empathy with friends and their children who were going off to college. Loosely modeled on Polonius's advice to his son Laertes ("to thine own self be true") in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mother's tone is varied – motivational, practical, gently exasperated, regretfully knowing that it's time for them to ignore her expectations and form their own.

The "Cliff Notes" Consortium is:

Haley Armstrong; South Dakota Mines Choir

Dwight Bigler; Virginia Tech Chamber Singers

Jeffrey Brillhart; Singing City Choir

Robert Duff; Brandeis University Chorus and Chamber Singers

Dean Luethi; Washington State University Concert Choir

Matthew Mehaffey; University Singers, University of Minnesota

Eugene Rogers; University of Michigan Chamber Choir

Randall Speer; Randolph College Chorale