

Meghan Do
Mr. Rutherford
Oxford Scholars
6 April 2022

Have I Done Enough?

I was fortunate enough to have parents invested in my educational growth, but not so overbearing that I felt their will was meant to bend my own. Because of this I started the process of my college applications the second half of my junior year, but the true internal conflict came into full swing at the beginning of my senior year.

The first step of my college process was evaluating my classes followed by curating a careful list of my extracurricular activities ranked in their level of importance. This could be considered the first crack in my clearly fragile foundation of self worth based heavily on academic validation. As I listed my activities it became apparent that compared to the students I had seen in the past, I had no clear shining leadership roles. While I was a member of two athletic teams and the leader of a volunteer group, the words “president” or “founder” never appeared on my resumé. In terms of my classes, they were competitive but generic.

Unfortunately, I had not attended a single JC course or conducted any stellar research having to do with the betterment of the medical community. But I was still shakily confident so I continued on.

Next, I was tasked with writing my essays. This required a deeper look into what my life had looked like academically and personally in the past few years. The result, fruitless. From a surface level perspective of my freshman through junior year I had lived contentedly and I felt embarrassed to even think of a struggle worth writing about. So as I applied to college after

college there was a build up of one thought, “have I done enough?”. My answer during the time, no.

As my decisions were released I became more and more anxious, especially about the UC decisions. My mother and three of my aunts are UC alumni along with many of my extended family friends. To my shock I was accepted to four out of the five I had applied to. While this was the biggest academic validation in my academic career, it did not help me shake the feeling that I had somehow tricked the application process. As I struggled with these emotions, my dad forced me to watch Steve Jobs’ Stanford Commencement address. He described his life philosophy, “Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose,” (Jobs) and so I employed his method every morning for two weeks, and asked myself, “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?” (Jobs). The question I asked myself evolved more to fit my situation regarding my emotions: “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to be constantly wondering if I am good enough?”. The clear answer, no.

After this realization I decided that even if my success regarding college applications had been a fluke, I could not stomach the thought of spending the last day of my life thinking about how worthless I was in comparison to my peers. So I stopped. Every time these thoughts of self doubt penetrated my mind I turned back to Steve Jobs, “You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart” (Jobs). And in truth my heart is the purest part of myself because it feels truthfully in the way that my brain and rationality cannot. This is what gives me hope of the future, of what I will accomplish and how the world around me will continue to spin despite its multitude of struggles.

While this personal crisis demonstrated to me how easy it is to become wrapped up in negative insecurities, it is important to realize that we cannot experience dark times without having experienced bright ones. There will always be challenges thrust upon us by ourselves or the rest of the world, but if we continue to search for light and focus our attention on how to better a situation, we cannot be left without optimism.

Work Cited

Jobs, Steve. "2005 Stanford Commencement Address." Stanford, 12 June 2005, Stanford University, Stanford, CA. Commencement Address.