

WARDE HALL

WELCOME TO
UNIVERSITY



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" EXPERIENCE TRADITION."

Experience Tradition
Ally Killean

(Collin is a junior and a Zack Morris look-a-like. He wears a College Tour Day t-shirt.)

Okay, so welcome! I'm Collin and I'm a junior here at CPU where you will all hopefully join me next year and "Experience Tradition. Expect Success." First things first, this is Tronvoldt Hall which is where many of the business classes are located. I took Econ here before I realized it was NOT for me, haha. But man if business is your thing this is the place to be. A quick tip... you might be inclined to sign up for an 8a.m. class, don't! I get it, I get it, you had class in high school at 7:55a.m. every single day. Trust me when I say this is not the same thing at all in college. Even your professors hate 8a.m. classes I promise you. The downfall is if you live off campus and don't sign up for an 8a.m. class, you will literally never find parking. So choose your adventure you know?

Okay, so we're going down to McHasky Center and later you guys will be able to check out the booths there that will feature all of the different clubs you can join. You can find me at "The Quill and the Sword Medieval Reenactment Club" booth where I'm Vice. What, you guys don't LARP? You gotta try it bro, it's dope. Like, did you ever feel like a nerd in high school but you kept it under wraps so you'd fit in? Literally only the people that wave their nerd flag in college have a chance at graduating. If anything hide how cool you are. Trust me. You will have more friends and better grades if you dust off that D-an-D knowledge and just roll with it.

Here's the library. Hey Karen! That's the librarian assistant, she's awesome. Yeah, this place is like my home away from home for sure, I'm here like every day. You don't believe me? That's my chair over there—Kevin, what the hell are you doing in my chair? There are like a thousand comfy chairs in here, dude. That one is clearly where I eat Famous Amos cookies and do homework. Yeah man, those ARE cookie crumbs, so I suggest you leave. Thanks. Yeah, so finding and claiming a comfy spot in the library is essential. Make sure people see you in it at the same time every day and have like a signature snack so people not only remember you, but they're like "Hmmm, cookie crumbs might get a little messy, I don't think I'd want to sit there." Maybe it's not in the library and it's in some other common area. But for real the library is chill. Just don't take my chair.

Hey Sharon! See you for poker later! That's Dr. Johnson—she's killer at poker. She's also head of the Biology department. You know in high school when you see your teachers out in the wild, like at Target with their wife or something and you both feel wrong? Like you shouldn't be glimpsing into each other's lives outside of class? Bro, it is not like that at all in college. Dr. Kim shared all his socials on the board on day one. His TikTok is the funniest. I heard his sister just got out of rehab and is doing really good, by the way.

Some people get kind of weirded out with how relaxed college can be, coming from high school where there's so many super strict rules. Like, when I realized you could wear hats in class I wore a hat every day and even brought a spare in my backpack in case I wanted to switch it up midday. Girls love fresh hats man. Anyway, you know how in high school you probably can't eat in class or have your phone out or whatever? Dude, someone in my Calc class brought in a Rotisserie chicken to class one day and no one cared. No one!

Another thing about college that's different is that in high school no one wants to really talk about academic stuff. When you're in high school as soon as the bell rings you forget everything and ask your friend about their weekend plans or whatever. In college, not only will you keep discussing the debate after class, you will start a whole Twitter feed about it later and get retweeted like 400 times. Trust me dude, you think 80 minutes is enough to discuss the theory of reductionism but it isn't!



Oh man, time is getting kind of short, so you know I think we're going to skip this hallway and continue this way to the Rec. Center. I know I'm a tour guide and I'm supposed to show you EVERYTHING but honestly I'm not going to show you every corner of the college because that is unfair to you, my friend. It would leave you out of a tradition that every college student finds themselves in. You will find yourself walking the same path to the same buildings day after day and then all of the sudden you'll see a sign for this hidden computer lab and you'll be so angry you've walked so far out of your way when you could've saved a million steps by going to this one very centrally located and convenient lab that offers color printing! Everyone needs to experience that, man. I'm not going to take that away from you. I promise I'm not trying to set you up for failure, it's not like that! I'm literally trying to set you up for success! So much of college is figuring things out for yourself, man, and it can be hard, but I'm telling you that feeling of figuring something out on your own, it's precious, dude. Precious.

Alright, and over here...

" EXPECT SUCCESS."

(Mia is a girl about nineteen years old. She carries an orange notebook.)

I like dreams. I like talking to other people about their dreams, studying them, all that Freudian stuff.

(She pulls out her orange notebook.) I carry this around with me and I write down other people's dreams. Sometimes they say they don't have any dreams to tell me about but I think that's bull.

Everyone dreams.

When people tell me about their dreams, normally I psychoanalyze them. I'm not an expert or anything, but I know enough. Don't look at me like that! (She stamps her foot.) I am a psychology

Anyway, I like hearing about other people's dreams, but mostly I like dreaming. I actually taught myself how to lucid dream. Do you know what that means? Basically, you're just aware that you're dreaming and you can control what happens. Cool right?

(She thumbs through her notebook.) Let's see...what was my first lucid dream? Oh! This one time I was dreaming that I was taken captive on a pirate ship. I was so scared but then I was like wait a minute...So I thought I would fly off the pirate ship and then I did. Isn't that so cool? I went and hung out with some mermaids for a bit too. Their tails are a lot warmer than you think they would be...Do you want to learn how to lucid dream too?

There are certain steps you have to take to train yourself to lucid dream. Like, you have to perform reality checks while you're awake. I usually push my index finger against the palm of my other hand like this (pushes her right index finger against her left palm.) I do this like ten times a day. When you're awake, your index finger will feel the resistance of your palm. But when you're dreaming, most of the time your finger will pass through your other hand. Basically you're just challenging your brain to differentiate between sleep and reality.

I also keep a dream journal. This just helps me understand my dreams a little more. But what really helps are the MILD and WBTB techniques. The MILD or Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams technique pretty much means that you tell yourself "I will know when I dream" over and over again. So basically you're training your brain to know when it's dreaming.

The WBTB or Wake Back to Bed technique is kind of annoying. You have to set an alarm for five or six hours after you fall asleep. You wake up during the REM stage of sleep when your brain is the most active. You're trying to wake up in the middle of a dream and go back to sleep. You'll be more likely to be conscious that you're dreaming and BAM you're lucid dreaming!

Do you still want to try it? Oh you totally should! Except, if you have schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, you're really not supposed to do it. But if you do it let me know! I'll write it down in my little notebook.



Dreams

by Jessica Purgett

Layout by Elsa Gustafson

THE STREETS

TAYLOR DEARBORN

I don't have to do this. This is not the life I want to live forever. I want to be the first to go to college in my family and show my future children that this is not the life for them. I am going to be a father soon. Our baby will be here in six months. We didn't plan it, but I am so thankful that this happened because I want to change this life I have been living. I want to do this for us and for our baby. I have been in this gang since I was thirteen years old and I have done things that I am not proud of. I don't want to be in jail for our baby's childhood, and the path I am going down right now could cause that.

I just got done trying to scare the hell out of a man who hasn't paid his drug debt back to us yet. My job was to make sure he paid no matter what his excuse was, but, man, it gets harder day by day. The poor man just got left by his wife, and she took their children. She said not only was she leaving him, but she was leaving the state with a new man. Shortly after this he lost his job because he couldn't get himself to leave his house. He was so sad he had no ambition, but then he was introduced to drugs. He paid for his first few doses, but after that he stopped. His money had run out and not only did he have me trying to force him to pay up, but his landlord had also come to collect his last month's rent. He didn't have the money and his landlord gave him an extension, but he has no way of getting money until he gets a new job. This event turned way darker than any of my other shake-downs had ever gone. I felt so bad for him that I was instantly speechless.

I felt so terrible for him I told him his fines were forgiven for six months, but after that he must pay up. He cried tears of joy because I had given him a break, but if he doesn't have the money, I am not responsible for what might happen. I knew that he needed this break. A moment to get back on his feet. I have been there multiple times before trying to scrounge up money to pay the gang. The gang takes care of me you know, but not without a price. I work hard for them, so I can stay under their protection and if I don't pull my weight and I come up short there are consequences.

This was just another reason I knew I needed to get out and fight for a better life for myself and our new family. I don't want to lose you guys. I lost my father to the streets, and my mom left right before I joined the gang. The gang has been my family for nine years and it is going to be hard to leave them, but it's for the best. I promise you, Penny, I will get out. I want a better life for us and the baby.



Vicuñas and Eagles

Nabil Abugattas

(Santiago, an 18-year-old Peruvian international freshman in college)

If you want to know how I decided to play here, I can tell you the whole journey. I promise you it is not that long. I began playing competitive soccer when I was twelve, different than most people that can make it to the college level in the US. All of the people I know that are trying to play soccer at a high level began really young, three or four years old. I was surfing and playing tennis until my high school soccer coach in Peru called me to try out for the team. I guess he called me because I was very tall and athletic, because I wasn't very skillful. I discovered I could play very well using my body, but my skills were terrible. I don't know why I decided to change sports when I was twelve. I wanted to be a professional tennis player till then. I guess that I was bored of tennis practice; training was very repetitive and boring, and I trained alone with my coach. Instead, all of my friends would practice soccer together

and talk about all the fun they had for hours.

My second year I did not want to be a bench player anymore. I was for sure having fun with my friends, but I wanted more. I don't know if I loved soccer at this point, I think my motivation was to finally become the best at something I enjoyed. I went to a Barcelona Academy in Peru. I trained there for one year. Practices were really boring, but focused on skill, which was exactly what I needed to improve on. When I was fourteen, my experience with soccer changed. I had been eating and breathing soccer. Watching as many games and obsessively trying to get better. And I did. That year we were the runner-up team of our regional high school tournament. I got looked at by scouts and got recruited by the U-16 squad of a professional team. I was the first one in my class to play for a team of that level. I was finally the best at something.

But why did I keep playing? I still don't know. Maybe I started to love soccer during that time. I don't know. All I know is that at that point, my body was behaving like an addict on rehab. My muscles would crave that feeling of running with the ball at my feet, of getting tired, hurt; the adrenaline, you know... I know that I wanted to prove myself as this opportunity presented, that I could make it, that in a future I could be a pro. I played there and in my high school until I was seventeen. Those were the most intense years. We won a lot, had a lot of disappointments. I made a lot of friends thanks to this sport. Met some of my closest people thanks to my new environment. Like my friend Joaquin, who gave me support and showed me how to be more disciplined outside the field. He showed me how to behave as a pro on and off the field, in order to become a better player. We also supported each other emotionally when we had rough times, becoming very close friends. I think that those years made me the player I am. I got recognition as an individual player both regionally and nationally, as the tournament MVP and the top goal scorer, respectively. I was that close to proving myself.

I don't want to sound cocky, but I do really believe I am good enough to become professional; at least in Peru. Then, why do I want to go to college in the US? To be honest, I don't want to go to this school, if I think with my heart. I don't want to go to any school. I want to take my chances and maybe make it to the pros in Peru. But if I have learned something in these years playing soccer, it's that we are fragile. Sometimes soccer players think they got everything. Maybe. But you never know when it could end. That is why I want to play at this University, because I don't know if I would have made it to first division back in my country; and if I would have, who can assure me that I would have had a long career? Injuries exist and they are career ending.

I don't know when I started to love playing soccer, but I do know now that I love it. It is the best psychologist I could ever find. Playing it is the game that brings me more fun in the world. Thanks to soccer I have met wonderful people and learned many valuable life lessons. It took me out of my comfort zone once and made me grow up, and for that I'm thankful. Why not give something back to soccer then? Why not take this chance and scholarship to play for a University and receive a college education? So yeah, my head tells me that playing in this school is the best thing for my future, and my heart tells me that I just want to keep playing and having fun, no matter if I play in front of millions, thousands, or two people. I just want to play.

Love, Big Bro

Josh Harmon

(Josh is a 21-year-old college junior. He is a black-haired blue-eyed Hispanic male, sitting in class wearing a black Nike hooded sweater, black denim skinny-jeans and white Jordan sneakers.)

Today, in my English class we were given the assignment to write about a college student's toughest struggle when transitioning to their new environment. Many of my classmates began to brainstorm, I heard struggles such as learning how to correctly study, and being responsible students like turning in assignments on time without the Professor reminding students each day.

I heard my classmates talk about having to feed themselves, staying on top of their laundry and sleep adjustments like having to live with someone else in the same room. Other students talked about the multiple distractions that college offers and how it's crucial to stay on top of studying and school work.

I sat in the back row of the classroom, bedhead and baggy-eyed since I overslept my alarm. I snuck my Airpod in my right ear, hidden by my black Nike hoodie, and began listening to Frank Ocean.

I pondered on my thoughts for a second.

I focused into the voices around me, I eavesdropped into the conversations of my classmates, but I never heard the one struggle I couldn't get out of my head.

I was homesick.

My little sister turned 13 last week, I won't be able to spend more than a couple weeks with her all year, and that's if I'm lucky. For her first year as a teenager, her older brother won't be around.

I felt guilty.

I sat back in my chair for a minute and realized all of my other classmates had roots, family, or at least a home that they could go back to only a few hours away.

I didn't have this luxury.

At the same time, it was a luxury for me to be living over 1,000 miles away from home. I never had to worry about my parents wanting me to come home for a weekend, or worse, them seeing my empty dorm room with a bed I hadn't made in weeks. My parents weren't able to simply hop in their car, take a drive and visit me. I liked being alone. I was able to go about my day the way that I wanted to.

Still, living so far away provided its own challenges. I missed my other half.

There was nothing more that I wanted than to be in the crowd cheering on my little sister as she stepped onto the field during her first Middle School soccer game. I wanted to be the first one to hug her with excitement after her first win, or be the first to hug her and treat her to some pizza after her first loss.

I wanted to be there telling the punk that broke my sister's heart, "You're lucky I don't beat the shit out of you."

At the same time, how intimidating can one be, half the distance of the country away?

I wanted to be there for all the moments that she was there for me.

[illegible]

What is on Your Mind

Barry Doe

I sit here and watch the cars go by. Where are they going? Why are they still out there? The world is dying and we're the reason why. I never thought it would come to this. We are living in our last days. At least that is what my Grandma tells me. She has been gone for what seems like a century. I still talk to her on a daily. The world dying and my life just started.

I hated the idea of college because I hated being around people. But hey if I can go to college and play the sport I love, then it should make it more bearable. Years go by and I begin to hate the sport that gave me a purpose in life. Fighting depression and barely making it through my last couple semesters I did not know how to cope with anything in my life.

February 19, 2020, my life changed and I got a new meaning of life. I watched my baby have my baby. I love them both with every blood cell and tendon in my bleeding heart. I had to fight back tears as I witnessed my daughter being born. As my college basketball career came to an end, I began a new journey to fatherhood. As I started to get my life back on track, the Universe put another bump in my road. It does not seem fair at all. Coronavirus put my life on hold.

School seems like the last thing on my mind every day. Every assignment that I have turned in is lifeless. I must think of different ways to provide not just for myself but for my new family. Work starting to slowly cut my hours, I am falling behind in school, and the worldwide pandemic seems to be getting worse. I must find new ways every day to keep myself optimistic. I never thought that this is what my mom meant when she told me that there are going to be rainy days.

Hi mom, it is raining, and the rain is turning to a storm. Please help me, I don't know what to do. The world is dying, and my life just started. I sit here and look at my daughter while she sleeps. I start to think of her and millions of other kids in the world. So innocent, they do not deserve this. Every day is a new day and when I see her, she gives me a reason to keep on going. The TV is loud and that wakes me up, I look up and it is breaking news. Are they serious? How can they do that? A few states are opening partially. Not a good idea in my eyes. There is no cure or vaccine. Opening the parts of states is just going to cause more and more cases of the virus.

A man was turned away weeks ago because he did not meet the criteria to be tested for the virus even though he had been exposed to people who had the virus. A friend's grandmother tested positive for the virus after going to a Casey's. A Veteran's home has over 70 patients with the virus. All these people are dead now.

It is going to be May soon. And soon enough, school is going to be over. I am staring at my planner trying to fill in the empty spots. This point, planning seems pointless. Maybe we will get our lives back after all.

Olivia Hoff

THE HALLOWEEN PARTY

BY JESSICA PURGETT

(LILY STANDS IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE. SHE HAS LONG BLONDE HAIR AND IS WEARING A HALLOWEEN COSTUME.)



I WAS GOING TO GO, AND THEN I WASN'T, BUT THEN I DECIDED TO GO. IT WAS A HALLOWEEN PARTY AT MY FRIEND'S HOUSE.



I GUESS I'D NEVER REALLY GONE TO ONE BEFORE, SO I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT. IT WASN'T LIKE THERE WERE A TON OF PEOPLE, BUT WE WERE IN HER DAD'S TINY MAN CAVE OUT BACK SO IT SEEMED PRETTY CRAMPED. I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE THERE WERE LIKE FIFTEEN PEOPLE THERE?

I WORE THIS (SHE PICKS AT HER SHORT BLACK SKIRT.) I WANTED TO BE SEXY, YOU KNOW? I BOUGHT THIS SLYTHERIN TIE 'CAUSE I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE CUTE. I DON'T THINK ANYONE AT THE PARTY KNEW WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.

ANYWAY, I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS WHEN I GOT THERE SO I JUST STARTED TAKING SHOTS. I HAD TWO, BUT I'M A LIGHTWEIGHT SO I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE DRUNK KINDA FAST. THEN WE PLAYED THIS CARD GAME AND I HAD A FEW MORE SHOTS. IT WAS KIND OF STUPID I GUESS. I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN DRINKING THAT MUCH, BUT I WAS HAVING FUN, YA KNOW?



THESE GUYS SHOWED UP A COUPLE HOURS LATER. THEY WERE DRESSED IN BEE COSTUMES. I DIDN'T KNOW THEIR NAMES SO I JUST CALLED THEM BEE NUMBER ONE AND BEE NUMBER TWO. WE WERE ALL HAVING A GOOD TIME, I TOOK ANOTHER SHOT. BIG MISTAKE. I STARTED FEELING SICK SO I SAT DOWN ON THE COUCH. BEE NUMBER ONE ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO TAKE A WALK, SO I SAID YES. WE ENDED UP WALKING UP AND DOWN THE STREETS NEXT TO MY FRIEND'S HOUSE. I GUESS WE ENDED UP STEALING A TRAFFIC CONE FROM A CONSTRUCTION SITE? I DON'T REMEMBER THAT. I DON'T REMEMBER A LOT OF WHAT HAPPENED, ACTUALLY.

I JUST REMEMBER THAT I ENDED UP IN A BATHROOM SOMEHOW, BEE NUMBER ONE HOLDING MY HAIR WHILE I EMPTIED THE ALCOHOL OUT OF MY STOMACH. YEAH, I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT ELSE HAPPENED...BUT MY FRIEND STEVE ENDED UP BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF BEE NUMBER ONE WHEN HE FOUND US IN THE BATHROOM. (SHE SHRUGS).



I STILL CAN'T FIND MY UNDERWEAR FROM THAT NIGHT. I GUESS I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN DRINKING SO MUCH...

Jacked Self-Confidence

(Kali is having a pick-me-up conversation with her good friend)

When was the last time I was proud of myself? What kind of question is that? I know you're always getting on me for my "lack of self-confidence, (finger air quotes) but I really don't think anyone celebrates themselves with a list of their accomplishments. Ugh-stop looking at me like that! I know I'm working your argument for you. Fine.

Umm...Okay, I have one. Just a few weeks ago I was going to visit my parents. I was enjoying the road trip per usual when I felt the sudden kick of my car. It took me a minute to even realize I'd blown a tire. Luckily this happened when I was passing through a small town, I think it was Gainesville or one of those neighboring towns, instead of it happening on the long stretch of interstate.

So, pulling over next to a gas station that was clearly out of business, creepy too I might add, I tried calling my dad for help. Well, as you know, the guy's been pretty bad at keeping track of his cell phone lately. The town seemed vacant to me, not a single car drove by while I got into the trunk and pulled out everything necessary to put my spare on.

The car-elevation thingy, the crank, the tire, all of it was just laying on the ground. So, I obviously don't have a mechanic's bone in my body. (She gestures to her entire self) I had seen this done before, y'know, so I was able to jack the car up and from there just sort of copy what I'd seen my dad do twice before. Halfway through I was absolutely drenched in sweat. It took me a lot longer than it would've taken anyone else, but I did it and made it all the way to my parents' before they even realized they'd missed my calls. Isn't that funny? It sounds pretty lame, but I'm proud I did that.





Ally Killian

Madison is wearing last night's clothes: a red tight fitting halter top, tight jeans. She holds her high heeled wedge sandals in one hand. Her hair is a slightly unkempt and her eye make-up is smudged.

I really told myself I'd go to class today. I did. I even studied for this quiz we were having. Well, I looked at the study guide last night anyway. I had my sweats on and I was lying on my bed and I had just pulled this study guide thing out when Kara texted me. Wanna go to Summit? 2 for 1s. And that is all it takes, ya know? 2 for 1s.

So of course I text her back—Uhh YEAH. And I'm up out of bed, study guide and books pushed to the side and I am changing out of those sweats faster than you could imagine. Picking out my outfit, straightening my hair, doing my make-up. It's like my life depends on it, looking good for this...this place. Or guys, I guess I'm trying to look hot for guys. Hot enough that they'll notice me right away, buy me drink, ignore their friends and instead try to impress me. Hot enough that when last call comes around—the last call that I swore I wouldn't hear that night—some guy is begging to take me home. And I pretend like I consider saying no.

That's the part I don't get. How does it feel to have a choice? Make a decision? Or more, make a responsible decision—something you're not going to regret later. Be ashamed of later. Like someone else might have gotten that text from Kara and just easily—Not tonight, gotta study and that's it. She stays home, studies, wakes up in her own bed and goes to class. Or maybe some would decide to go out. They'd go out and have fun and flirt with some guy, but when he starts inviting them to his apartment they just say—no, sorry I gotta go home tonight. Like it's a possibility?

High school was so different. I went to school every single day, with my work done even. I mean—don't get me wrong—I still partied, but I lived at home, ya know? Plus I had my friends, the same friends I've had since middle school, waiting to see me at school. Now my friends are spread across multiple states. A few of them, like Kara, go to my school but we all have different classes. I sit in a lecture hall with 200 people and I'm supposed to get to know these people? I wouldn't even know where to start.

So I'm lonely, ya know? I go out and party with my friends because I'm used to seeing them every day. I go home with some guy because I miss being loved and touched. I miss feeling special. I thought college was going to be this place where you can have all of these experiences at once: freedom, growth, friendship, love, knowledge.....like a bar special—2 for 1. So many experiences for the price of just one tuition. But I'm starting to learn it's a lie, just a scam meant to bring in more bodies and more money.

A bar has all the liquor in the world and no matter how they price it, your body can only handle so much before it starts to reject it. Some of it has to come back up. A light-weight like me can only handle so much 2 for 1s.

Thank you for your payment

Josh Hartman

Hey, sorry it's so late, I just got back to my dorm from work. I picked up another closing shift at the restaurant today, we've been super busy with customers coming to eat and try out our new special. My heels were aching all night, I need to go get some new work shoes already.

I have a couple assignments to get done tonight and then I'm going to close my eyes for a few hours before I wake up and get ready for my 9 a.m. so I'll try to keep our conversation brief.

I need you to sign off on a loan for me.

All the additional shifts and side jobs that I've been picking up still aren't cutting the funds that I'll need to attend classes next semester. Each year my tuition and housing prices are raised and I'm starting to get overwhelmed with school bills and payments.

I'm so close to graduation, but it still feels like so far away.

I'm so close to graduation, but the debt that I've acquired has put me into a hole so deep.

I'm so close to graduation and moving forward with the rest of my life, but so in debt that I'll be making payments to a school I no longer attend, until I'm dead.

I hate to put you in this position, but I feel like I've come so far and accomplished so much, the only thing I can do is finish my school career on a high note. Still, without the last semester, every semester before will have been for nothing.

I hate to have to reach out to you first, but I couldn't live with myself going back to the same mother who abandoned me in the first place and asking for her support.

That evil monster of a woman is living for that moment.

The day I crawl back to her pedicured toes and ask for assistance and care and nourishment. To which she will reply. "I told you that you weren't prepared for the real world."



Living Through It

Haley Weideman



Freshman year of college I met hundreds of amazing people that I could relate to and develop new friendships with. I lived alone due to my comfort level with strangers, but came to find that strangers are amazing and don't stay strangers for long. From playing sports, to my hall floormates, to meeting people in my classes, there were now multiple ways to find exciting new people with similar interests. With my new freedom, I had the freedom to do what I wanted, but more importantly be with who I wanted to be with.

It's interesting how you're naturally drawn to some while others lose their ranking over time. Sophomore year I flipped a switch on my living situation, moving into an apartment-style dorm with eleven others. These were mostly women that I'd met freshman year and wanted to spend more time with. Together-time nearly quadrupled. I never had to worry about having someone to talk to, there were just too many of us for that worry. That apartment created a small community, and I learned a lot about how to take care of others and be taken care of in return.

This group became more concentrated the following year. Junior year, another change came as I moved off-campus and into a large house with four of the women from my previous apartment. Picking favorites is unfortunately a part of friendships. We now had more space and could spend a lot of time with the few we liked best. It was deeper than being spread thinly amongst many roommates.

Senior year we stayed in that house, losing one roommate halfway through the scholastic year. The group was down to four. Just the four of us. These are the gals I'm the absolute closest with. We would spend more time together in the living room that year. Personal space wasn't an option, and we wouldn't have it any other way.

As it turns out, life comes at you faster than you think. One day I'm sitting in the dining room chatting with my three roommates over coffee and the next I'm living alone in a different city, calling them less and less frequently. I no longer think of Lori's clicks at the end of her sentences or Allie's eyebrow raises. McKenzie's laugh is no longer in the next room over. It's really hard staying connected to people when you all have other lives to live in different places. I'm convinced that's just how it is.

Reaching Adulthood:

You can't turn around without change staring you dead in the face
...seriously.