

My life road.

Up until about a year ago, I had it set. I knew where I wanted to go, and what I wanted to do. In the past year, my road went from nicely paved and smooth, to a little bit bumpy and rocky. Unfortunately, the Michigan economic downturn has severely impacted my father's ability, as the sole provider for our family, to secure a consistent monthly income as he recently had to close his doors to his manufacturing plant. This created a major stress level on my parents, and they decided to get a divorce. I think it took it a little personally, mainly because I was the one who had to bear it on my shoulders as my mother confessed her choice without telling my father first. I felt discouraged for a few reasons. I did my best to try to talk to my mom about changing her mind, to seek counseling, anything to keep our family "whole" but I was unsuccessful. That all happened in June of last year. Then reality hit in, with my dad not having a steady job, and not having a huge life savings, how was I to pay for college? So, I went against my father's wishes and decided to get a student loan for myself. My dad's pride I think was hurt. I think he realized that I knew the actual severity of the financial problems and I knew if I wanted to go to school, I had to take it into my own hands. And so I did, as I write this paper today.

I grew up in Bloomfield Hills Michigan. To quote governmental stats,

"Bloomfield Hills is located in the southeast quadrant of Oakland County.

As of the 2000 census, the city population was 3,940. Bloomfield Hills consistently ranks as one of the top five wealthiest cities in the United States consisting of over 1,000 households. It currently is listed at the

number four position and in 1990 it was ranked number 2. Thirty-nine percent of households in Bloomfield Hills have a value of over \$1,000,000.

This value is also the highest percentage of all houses in Bloomfield Hills."

Needless to say, I had a privileged childhood and adolescence. Family vacation at every opportunity was a must, or eating at fancy restaurants on special occasions were common reoccurrences. I can recall my family eating at one of my favorite restaurants, and having a complete stranger come up and express how notable he thought me and my siblings were behaving. My parents were not strict, we just knew what was expected of us, and I think that is one trait that I've held onto. One of my favorite childhood memories however would be our summers. I am lucky enough to have a cottage in Northern Michigan, a small, quaint little area where everyone knows everyone and its okay to go out and get dirty. Some say you have to experience this in order to get the full effect. Waking up, and feeling the morning sun as I put my toes in the water of the lake my cottage is on, is something that today, I close my eyes and still imagine. Even famous singer Kid Rock knows what I am explaining, when he sings the song "All Summer Long". After my family would spend a month or so here, we would pack up our things and take camping trips. If there is a national park within the United States I have been there, expect for a few. Hiking, biking, camping and canoeing. Hiking 9 miles to see something remarkable is something I learned to endure. These are all things we experienced as a family. I believe it is because of my childhood, the advantages that I was able to encounter is what gives me the power to think, anything is possible as long as you put some effort into it.

The next trait I find I have is my willingness to accept all and to quote my mom, “give the other person the benefit of doubt.” When I was in eighth grade, I started to attend the Academy of the Sacred Heart. It was an all girl school that was the cliché girl’s school. I had some nuns as teachers and I had to wear the plaid pleated skirt. Besides being the new girl, one thing made me stand out. You see, at ASH it was a very small school. In fact, I was the 35th student, for the class of 2005. And the other 34 girls went to school with one another from day one. All their cliques, and groups had already been made and no one seemed to want to accept me into their group. This became apparent on one day. One day that will forever make me proud of who I am. I was at lunch one day when I noticed a girl crying at her lunch table. I went over to see what was wrong, and if I could provide a shoulder for her to lean on. This is when she told me why she was crying. “Amy you are new, and you have never really asked to sit with me at lunch,” was her response to when I asked her what was wrong. I couldn’t believe it. So I told her not to be crazy and I sat with her that day. However, I had this weird feeling the entire time I ate my lunch. Later that day, a girl came up to me and looked at me with a serious look on her face. ‘Amy, you know why she was crying don’t you?’” she asked. I responded yes explaining what the tearful girl had said. “No, that’s not the truth” my informant had told me. “Sara* paid her to act to be upset so you wouldn’t be around her at lunch,” she told me as we walked into Spanish class. I couldn’t believe it. What did I do to her for her to act so coldly to me? Heck, I thought we were friends. Somehow between my 7th hour Spanish class and the next class, the principal heard word of this prank and this created a huge fiasco, which then included Sara’s mother. I never met the lady before and she scolded me and gave me dirty looks. I told the

principal, with a smile, “if she doesn’t want to be my friend, it’s her loss, because if she had given me the chance, I am a great friend to have.” I went home that day, acting as if nothing had happened and my mom gave me a hug, and said you are a much bigger person than I am Amy. I realized how she found out. The principal called explaining what had happened and how mature my response was. I have always given the other person the benefit, and I have always accepted everyone into my oversized heart.

I am grateful of my experience at Sacred Heart for one big reason, and that reason is Mrs. Strong. Let me tell you, she was the most intimidating, fearful woman in the 8th grade. She had such strict rules and seemed impossible to please. However I created a very interesting relationship with my teacher and she pushed me in ways to better myself for my education. It is because of her help, that I realized I wanted to become a teacher. If that “scary woman” can help me the way she did, then maybe I can help someone in the same manner.

High school was great, in fact it was so great, it is a chapter that seems to blur all as one. It taught me how to excel, and accept things. How to be more organized and goal oriented and the next thing I knew, I was reading my acceptance letter to college aloud at the dinner table.

At orientation, I knew what my career path was. Elementary Education. That was easy. The first year of classes, seemed just as easy. I had a decent report card, in fact, it was a little better than what I was able to receive in high school. That slowly started to change. I don’t know if it was because of my old study habits just weren’t matching the criteria anymore, or if I just wasn’t smart enough. I hate to admit option B so, I say option A. At college, you need to have a specific GPA in order to advance, and for the

life of me, I could not pass certain classes. I had study groups and tutors and before you know it, I had spent \$2,700 dollars on one class.

Then, my wake up call. With my parents' divorce, and my dad's loss of work, I was now \$20,000 in debt and knew I needed to figure something out. My dream of becoming a teacher was slowly slipping away for two reasons. 1, lack of funds, and 2, my incapability of passing some classes. I knew something had to be done. My one friend, who is in a similar situation, decided that she, just wasn't going to go to school anymore until she can figure it out. Her beliefs is that she just needed some time to grow up and that she would go back. I knew that wasn't a choice for me. So to quote Robert Frost as he wrote in The Road Not Taken,

"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

Here I am, in my 5th year, and I can't decide what one thing I am good at. Then I realize, I have learned so much here at Ferris State. I have a massive appreciation for Mathematics, Science, Geography and my new favorite Communications. I have excelled in these areas and know that with my knowledge something good will come of it. Therefore I decided to go into the field of BIS. With this, I know I will be able to take all the life lessons, both academically and socially and become something great of myself, and then maybe even go back to school to finish my teaching degree.

* Name has been changed.