

I have rewritten this part quite a few times, because the last two years of my life have been anything but stagnant. August 26, 2021, exactly a week into my first year at college I wrote, "I am who I wanna be and I am exactly where I wanna be. I am home. At last." I laughed when I found this line because I had no idea what was yet to come. I convinced myself that I knew exactly who I was and that I reached my happy ending. A happy ending at 18. Sounds crazy right? Saying it out loud, yeah sure it does. But this is how my mind has always worked. I always think I've got it all figured out. That I've reached my permanent destination. That every human I meet works the same way. I've been trying to teach myself that nothing is permanent. That everybody is different. That my past does not define me or my future. I can break free of the chains that held me down for so long. I've been trying to break free of a victim mentality too. I don't always have to cave in and blame myself when something goes wrong. I am not letting other people's behaviors dictate the way I view myself. I recently learned that the people who have made me view myself in a negative way, affected my self-esteem, or gave me trust issues are not good people. Shocking exposition, right? I let these people who are so incredibly small, have such great power over me. I let them control how my next relationships and friendships went. I let them be the reason why I would have to sit people down and tell them why I won't be able to trust them for a while. Or why I would never believe them when they told me they loved me or that they thought I was special. I always need people to tell me specifically why they love me, instead of just trusting that they love me because they love me. Nothing more, nothing less. Throughout all of the chaos, the drama, and the negativity I know that I am constantly building the person I want to be. Even when life throws me a few, or a lot, of curveballs, I let these curveballs depict who I want to become. I noticed that throughout it all, it always comes down to my heart. No matter what I have gone through or how many people have hurt me, I still end up loving. I know that I have a bigger heart than the average human, and with that, comes a lot of responsibilities, good and bad. I always give all the love that I can, sometimes so much so that people take it for granted or take advantage of it. I give and I give and I give until I have nothing

left over for myself. Sometimes I'll lay awake at night and find myself crying because I always feel like I love people more than they love me. I just have to remember that I was born with a special gift and even during the times where I was sure my heart had closed up, it never did. There were times where I swore off love forever, but found myself loving the very next day. My heart never gives up, and I am so grateful for that. And so with that, I'm in my 20th year of living. There is no way in hell I know exactly who I am and where I wanna be right now. My entire self is made up of little pieces of every person who has ever been in my life. People, places, and things surprise me each and every day. My best friend says that she wouldn't be here if I never came into her life. My father and I will have a conversation about politics and come to an agreement. My brother and I will eat at Popeyes and talk about girls, without getting into a fight. A company will be impressed with my resume and invite me to intern for them. My ex says that I light up any room I walk into. Some old friends will text me and say that they are so proud at how far I have come. I'll spend a semester in Los Angeles and learn how to work in the real film industry. People who I thought would be in my life forever, I no longer speak to. These are the things that I have come to learn about myself. The journey of knowing myself and learning to love myself will never end, because that's what we are all here to do. In terms of what is yet to come, I know there will be bad moments because that's what always happens. But I also know that there is so much good to come. I don't know what, but I'm teaching myself not to guess anymore. I'm letting myself grow naturally and remembering that no feeling stays forever. I'm on this long and crazy journey to find my purposes in life. Although it's been hard, I've learned that every moment is a lesson. Thank you to every person who has hurt me because you have made my heart grow bigger and have taught me that I never want to make anyone feel the way that you made me feel. And most importantly, thank you to every person who has brought me love and happiness into my life. You are the reason I never give up. I'll continue my journey of healing and loving, and I wish you luck on yours.