

Why College Is Important To Me

By Stephany Rodriguez

Whenever I clean out my room, I find myself trailing off as I dig up old, dusted objects that I've kept since my elementary school years. Recently, I found trinkets that my friends had given me throughout my years. A small, glass palm tree figurine that my 5th grade best friend gifted me because we used to say she was "as tall as a tree". A happy birthday card that my 6th grade best friend gave me and I kept because it meant a lot to me that she had remembered. An acrylic painting that a friend in highschool, who had never painted before, made for me and I kept because we joked that the mountains looked like meatballs.

As I reminisced with the objects in my hand, I came to the sheer realization that that's all they were: memories. My 5th grade best friend moved to another state and I have not seen her since. My 6th grade best friend and I "outgrew" each other, there was no argument or fallout- we just stopped talking kind of out of nowhere. And my friend who had painted me the meatballs, I have not spoken to, or vice versa, in a long time. At this point, you might be asking yourself, what does this have to do with college? Well let me tell you, it has everything to do with college. These people who I no longer interact with are the epitome of taking life day by day. Memories and experiences are what you make of them and what you take from them. From these three people, I've learned that lighthearted jokes, remembering details about someone's life, or making something for a friend can make their day, or in my case, their next few years.

College can be what you make of it and what you take from it. Whether you use this opportunity to explore your interest or find new ones. Whether you use this opportunity to merge your hobbies and academics. Or whether you use this opportunity to strengthen your sense as a global citizen. It's up to you and you only. It's up to you to fulfill what you believe will help you

reach serenity with yourself. College is important to me because it will help fulfill my intentions: because I've come to the realization that I want to live a life of giving and guaranteeing that every person I encounter has moments like these where they can look back and genuinely smile. But also, look to the present with warmth and kindness. Graduating college will be the beginning of my displays of community strength, perseverance, and compassion.

As I placed my trinkets back into the box, it dawned on me that objects don't hold memories or experiences, you do. I hold the power to implement these learnings onto my future college years. Palm tree, card, and meatballs: it was fun while it lasted but now, it's time to take the next step in my journey.