

Why College is Important to Me

by

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My mom is a Grateful Dead fan. I am not.

Unfortunately for me, whether to the grocery store, tutoring sessions, soccer practice, or nearly anyplace else, if my mom is driving, the Grateful Dead's coming along. While my mom is a fan of all the Grateful Dead's music, there's one song she loves more than the rest, Eyes of the World. It's her absolute favorite song, and she plays it *constantly*.

Wake up to find out that you are the eyes of the world.... ("Eyes of The World - Grateful Dead").

"Again? Why does she have to play this song *all the time*, and how could I forget my earbuds? Ugh" Slumped in my seat listening to this God-forsaken song for the ten-millionth time, I begrudgingly began focusing on the lyrics, and much to my surprise, began connecting them to my college journey and what it means to me...

And seeds that were silent all burst into bloom and decay/And night comes so quiet; it's close on the heels of the day... ("Eyes of The World - Grateful Dead"). As I listened, I was immediately struck by the correlation between those lyrics and my college journey, realizing that college is, in essence, the crossroads of my past and my future—both the culmination of years

of hard work and a time to plant the 'seeds' that will later 'burst into bloom' as I forge my path forward into adulthood.

It occurred to me that when I go off to college, for the first time, I'll be the sole author of my life story. As past experiences and new experiences guide me, I will begin answering some of my biggest questions about myself: who am I? What matters most to me? What kind of life do I want? I'll be on my own, responsible for myself and my choices, putting to use all the tools and resources my education and life experiences thus far have provided me as I explore new worlds and ways of thinking that will help to inform who and what I become in adulthood and the shape my life takes from that point forward.

As terrifying and overwhelming as those thoughts are, they're also hugely inspiring! Intense discovery, autonomy, curiosity, and freedom of thought are the building blocks of a life well-lived, and the foundation a college education is built upon. They're what I've always yearned for, and they're right within my grasp!

While I know my college journey will involve exploring the world (and myself) through academics and discovering ways to use my love for Computer Science to impact others (especially other females within the STEM community), I would be lying if I said I know precisely what the 'seeds' that I plant during my college journey will ultimately 'bloom' into. And I'm okay with that. I know, eventually, I will figure it all out.... And, honestly, that's the aspect of college I'm most looking forward to—the privilege and opportunity to figure it all out...

So, while I still can't say honestly that I *like* the Grateful Dead or Eyes of the World, I can admit I appreciate the depth and beauty of their lyrics and the wisdom and meaning found within them. And, because of that, they will always hold a special space in my heart as I journey from high school to college and beyond.