

Transitioning Does Not Mean Escaping

College seemed to be another escape, a new stepping stone to a young person's life. To me, college was the unfound freedom to allow myself to experience things without any limitation or censorship from parents or teachers. However, being in a different environment helped expose the internal conflicts that I tried to hide. I dove into the hectic college life, consuming many hours studying, trying to balance work and play. Nevertheless, I hit a breaking point in mid-semester. I made a suicide attempt in my college dorm.

Close friends and classmates were downstairs, laughing and playing a competitive game of beer pong while I lay in bed consumed by a deep sadness that was hard to evade. I took 46 sleeping pills with a bottle of NyQuil and woke up two days later with 12 missed calls from my friends and parents wondering where I was. I looked at my wrist and saw the deep crimson lesions I had made in my state of profound sadness. I looked at the calendar and realized that I had missed two days of classes. I went to my computer and stared at the empty computer screen that was supposed to be an email message to my professors: What was I supposed to say?

I never addressed the problems that I was dealing with then. I continued to let problems devour me, like a dark cloud over my head, blinding me to every good thing that I had to the point where I felt there was no escape. I felt as if I were jumping in front of a train. Finally, after a long talk with a close friend I found my will to get better, and I went to the counseling center in my school. At the end of the week, I was admitted to a psychiatric hospital after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. I felt complete and utter shock as I arrived. I saw women in their



mid-forties who had tried to kill themselves, men whose houses had been foreclosed, and a soldier who still had vivid memories of the people he had killed. Initially, I felt as if I were insane. I longed to go back home, to see my friends and family. However, I slowly realized that being at that hospital was for my benefit. I needed to work on myself. After a week of intensive group therapy and medication, I felt more grounded than before. I learned techniques to help manage my emotions and develop a clear sense of self.

Upon returning to school, I felt as if I were reborn. I saw things in a new light. I felt as if the demons that had been afflicting me for months had finally disappeared.

However, I still struggled to find support. Initially, my parents and close friends did not understand what borderline personality disorder was or how to help someone who has it. Because of my experience, I wish I could see change in the mental health system through an improved understanding of mental disorders. I also want more people to know how to handle difficult situations with someone who has a mental health condition. If there were more programs that were willing to teach people about these conditions and help family members understand the illnesses that are plaguing their loved ones, that would make individuals who are struggling with the disease feel as if they have support.

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