From Loneliness to Happiness: One of the Hardest Battles

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What is happiness? To me, happiness is the thought of loving yourself and taking your life into your own hands. Happiness, for quite awhile, was very foreign to me. Granted, I was always a happy person, that was until recently.

A few months back, I was in the summer of my Senior Year, and while being a Senior is "cool" and all that, it's also a very stressful time for many people. It's time to crack down on college applications, student loan applications, getting transcripts sent to colleges, narrowing down the list of schools we are applying for, and a lot more. (You get my point.) Anyways, I felt like it was one of the worst times for me. I lost a lot of control over my life and I'm still trying to take that back. I felt like people were making my decisions for me, and telling me where to go and where not to go. I felt so torn balancing my happiness and everyone else's happiness that my mental and emotional health was damaged in the process.

I was losing sight of who I know I am, and instead hiding behind a "happy" persona that I once truly was. My happiness started to fade away more and more over the following weeks. I reached a point I'd never thought I'd get to.

My breaking point.

I remember one day I had to fight myself from throwing the dishes and destroying them. It was after I had one of the most heartbreaking conversations with my mom, and I remember telling myself, "*Don't throw it. Do not throw the pan lid.*" Right as I told myself that, I slid down the fridge, sat on the kitchen floor and just sobbed. The fact that I had to fight myself not to do the dishes, that was a huge sign for me. It was like someone was telling me, "Hey, this is going to be one of the hardest days of your life." I remember after that, I ran up to my room and called one of my closest friends. I told her everything that was going on. I told her how alone I felt, how scared I was, how under appreciated I felt, and how much this was taking a toll on me. She told me that I had reached my breaking point and to come back from that is never easy.

One thing I can never forget about that day was how terrified I was. I was so scared that I would never be happy again and that I would never be myself again. I never thought that I would've reached that point in my life at the age of 17, let alone reaching that point at all. That was when I knew that this was going to be the hardest battle I'd ever fight in my life. Forget about my sexuality, forget about my relationship, forget about everything. This is about the fight for my mental and emotional health and how to be myself again. That was what I was fighting for. Not my academic standpoint, not the people around me, what I was fighting for was for *me*. As narcissistic as that might sound, this was a fight to bring myself back.

I felt so lost and alone, but I didn't want my friends or my family to know that I was fighting a mental-emotional battle. I didn't want them to know how I felt. I wanted to hide behind the shell of who I knew I was and portray that role to everyone around me. I must say, that was one of the worst things I could've done for myself, because I was just making it all worse. I was in my head more, I was letting the negativity from everyone else surround me, and I was letting

myself down. The real Brianna would never do something like this, but I did.

I was trapped in a formerly positive mentality that was being swarmed with negativity. It was like I was banging on the doors to let me out, but no one would come. No one would come, because I wouldn't let them. I was about to give up on trying to get out, until a few weeks ago.

I had written a rough draft of a song back in mid-September called, "why i'm not happy", (lowercase intended), and I found that to be a huge release for me. Though cryptic and subtle, it's one of my best pieces, in my personal opinion. I talked about how I was losing myself in the worst battle I've ever fought. I wasn't taking care of myself, I wasn't eating right and I was losing weight. I felt like I was sinking into something I never thought I'd come out of. I felt so out of my own control, like everyone was making my own decisions for me and I had to say, "Enough is enough! This is my life, and I need to take it back!"

When I would be asked why I wasn't happy, I would lie and say that I didn't know, when in reality I did know why. I just didn't want to upset

anyone or let them in. My mind was such a mess, and it needed to be cleaned. Every day, I would just come home and want to cry. There have been multiple time where I had done just that, and those were some of my toughest days. I kept on going back to where I started with, "Where do I go from here?" I was craving a change in my life and that change was taking control of my life, not letting others take that away and control me. Towards the end, I talk about how "home" isn't really *home*. Two *very* different standpoints, the home you physically live in, and the home that you are connected to and feel whole in. "Home" just wasn't *home*. I was feeling under appreciated by a certain person in my household, and it had been happening for a long time. I didn't feel loved at all. I felt *nothing*, absolutely *nothing* coming from that person. I never felt anything genuine when they would tell me they love me or they appreciated my help. I just felt like they were saying that to say that. I felt *alone*.

One day, I almost tore up their closet because of how I felt. That was terrifying for me, because I would never let myself feel that way. I always let stuff like this go fairly easily, but when it's from someone you love, it's so much harder. We've

talked about this multiple times, and they're alright for a few days, then it's back to the way it was. It's been like this for months, ask anybody. I still feel this way a lot, but I try not to talk to that person about it, because I'm trying to avoid having the same thing happen. To make things even worse, I can hear them talk about me behind my back while I'm sitting on the couch and they're in their room. That's when you know the truth about someone, regardless of who they are in your family. That's something that hits hard, you know. You think you can trust someone who somewhat raised you and "loves" you. Give me a break, I would *never* go behind someone I love and talk about them when I think I'm safe, just because I'm behind a closed door. There's such a thing as thing walls, you know. Honestly, if you can't wait to talk about me, can't you just wait until I'm out of the house for good? For such a smart and over qualified person, you sure don't know how much you hurt people. I'm really tired of all of the transparency I have to deal with from you. I can see right through your lies. You "love" me? Right. Try again later.

Anyways, to get back on track here, I want to finally talk about things that helped bring me back.

(**Disclaimer**: while I'm not entirely back to myself again, these people/things helped me get to where I am now.)

One thing that helped me get to where I am now was writing that song. As ironic as this sounds, "why i'm not happy" really makes me happy. Like I said before, it's became such a huge release for me. After finishing the rough draft, I felt so much weight being lifted off of my shoulders. I could breathe again, and I felt a little more free. I really love that song so much, and I'm still tinkering with it today, but I promise it will be finished! Until then, you'll just have to wait.

Something else that really helped was choir. Though I have a very tiny voice and I'm very timid and nervous, I love being in choir. I feel such an acceptance to release all of the negativity and be who I am, and that's all because of my choir teacher, who happens to be one of my favorite humans. She taught me that choir isn't only notes and rhythms, choir is about being a family and being able to lean on each other in our time of need. Being in a choir is being able to trust one another and become one. If we're not one, we're not a choir, we're a train

wreck just waiting to happen. Though I hate the thought of what people may think of me, I realize no one really cares about how good you sound. What people care about is how *we* sound as a whole, not as individuals. We want to be able to build on each other and grow and improve ourselves, so we can sound amazing as one. Choir has helped me so much with coming out of my shell and being the person that I know I am. This is a thank you to the best choir teacher ever, and you know who you are.

Another thing that helped me, though somewhat small and insignificant, was setting up my light strip. I set up this led light strip that I've had sitting around since Christmas, and I have to say, it's helped a lot. I made a change in my surroundings, and though it was a small change physically, it made a huge change in my mental-emotional health. I feel so much more relaxed and in my element with these lights, and they help keep me focused. I can't stress how much I love my lights!

Something else that had helped greatly was taking a mental health day. I knew that normal weekends wouldn't cut it this past weekend, so this past Friday, I took a mental health day and

stayed home from school. Don't get me wrong, I love school, but I do a lot in and around the school and it can get overwhelming. I would do all of my templates for the week in one day, which was both physically and mentally exhausting. I'm trying not to do that anymore and do it little by little, but sometimes it's hard to avoid. Anyways, that mental health day really helped take some weight off of my shoulders. I felt so much happier the past few days. I even genuinely giggled, and I hadn't heard that in long time. I was able to take a breather and listen to songs that make me happy. The songs that once made me happy, they now make me even happier. Yesterday, I walked home smiling almost the entire time. I couldn't stop myself and that *never* happens. I knew that a lot of the person that I knew I was started to come back, and it was one of the best feelings. It made me feel so whole and happy.

Someone I have to thank for that is my mom. She would talk to me almost every day these past few weeks, and it helped me so much. She would listen to me and respect what I had to say. When I told her what was going on with that person talking about me, I was telling her how alone I felt and she listened to me. She knew the

feeling that I felt. I told her that I didn't want to become unhappy again, that I was just starting to love myself again, and how I felt like I didn't feel loved and didn't really love myself anymore. She told me that none of this is on my part, that this is what they're doing. She said that I don't have to become unhappy and loathe myself, because of what that person is saying and how they're hurting me. She said to me, "That's their problem, not yours, honey. I know you feel alone, and I know how much that hurts. I went through that with them, too. You can't just let it go, you have to tell yourself that it's not your problem. They're hurting you, you're not hurting yourself. You are amazing, Brianna, and if that person wants to talk about you, then they can't see how amazing you truly are. I love you, honey, now please go eat before that person yells at you."

I love my mom. My mom is one of the most amazing humans I've ever had in my corner. She will always be on my side, no matter what. She loves me for who I am and will never, *never* go behind me and talk about me like someone else does. She is genuine to me. When she says that she loves me, I feel it. When she says she appreciates me, I feel it. When she hugs me, I

feel it. My mom, despite her flaws, is someone that I can't be without. If I didn't have my mom, I don't know who I'd be. She makes me so happy and I love her to pieces. I mean, she's my mother, she's seen me at my worst and at my best, and I've seen her at hers. We've both grown from being around each other, and I'm glad that I still have her, even if she lives two hours away. I can still feel the love, no matter the distance. She is one of my biggest inspirations, regardless of what she's done in the past. She is someone who sees me as me, not a child, not an adult, not as anything other than me. Her daughter. My mom will forever hold a massive piece of my heart, and I know I'll always hold a piece of hers. I love you, momma.

So, happiness, we meet again, old friend. I hope I don't lose you again, as you're growing more on me. You're something that I will hold forever close and dear. I love the feeling you give me when you're around. You've brought me back with you, and I can't thank you enough. Thank you for coming back and allowing me to let you in and getting me out of the negative mentality that I was trapped in. Thank you for finally opening the doors and pulling me out. Thank you, happiness, for letting me love myself again.

Thank you, happiness, for bringing me back to the person I once was. Thank you, happiness, for showing me that everything is going to be okay. Thank you, happiness, for showing me what I need. I could never thank you enough, happiness, for bringing light back into my life. Thank you, happiness, for loving me.

Thank you, happiness, for all that you have done. I love you, happiness.