

I felt my chest rise, and fall. Rise, and fall. Until it didn't. My current dreams of what could have been the future were disrupted, flat lining into a blank white screen. With this, my body had become lighter. I had the urge to move, but I was simply not capable of it. It was almost as if my body was reprogrammed, and I had yet to read the manual. There was this power, higher than anything I could obtain. I could practically feel the change of dominance, and the lack of control I had over my own self. Regardless of how dominating this feeling was, it was loving. It's ironic how something so overpowering, and all consuming, can feel so comforting and soft. Like a warm embrace. But what was it? What could possibly be strong enough to spark this newfound faith in me? Could it have been what everyone was so believing in? Could it have been Him?

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.”

Matthew 7:13

Faith. The air grows tense, only to release in a gust of wind. The wind was warm, the continuous feeling of comfort and love running through me. Two strong arms seemed to pull me into a tight embrace, as the slicing sound of golden bars emerge from the ground. A narrow gate forms, leading to a path of steps. The first step is tall, a climb to say the least. How was I going to manage a climb so strenuous? As I stood there, worry almost consuming me, the area blanked, yet again. Shown to me was a flashback to a moment in my lifetime. At the age fourteen, my father was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer. In front on me, was a bed where my ill father was hospitalized. My large family gathered around the bed with gloom faces. As we scanned the room, looking down upon the members of my family and the worrisome looks they held, in came me. Unlike the others, I came in with balloons and a warmer, happier smile. At such a rough time in everyone's life, fourteen year old me had no time to worry. If you are too busy worrying, you have no time to have faith in God. This flashback put into context, the reasoning as to why I surpassed this step. I had faith. I have faith. God can do no wrong, and I believe and love Him full heartedly.

“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of me.”

2 Corinthians 8:21

Honesty. A black step emerges from the previous. There was a wedge missing from the step. One that you could fall through. Again, a flashback from my previous life was displayed in front of me. I unlocked the door to my family home, turning the cold doorknob ever so slightly, trying not to create any noise. The clock that hung in my mudroom read 2:29 am. As I tiptoed my way through the halls and up the stairs, my white tennis shoes sharply hit the hardwood, creating a shriek that rattled through my home. I wasn't supposed to be out this late, or out at all. Especially with the boy I was just spending my night with. Before I could even reach the final step to enter my bedroom, my mother's hand wrapped firmly around my wrist. I looked back at her, seeing how disheveled she was. Her glasses were perched on the bridge of her nose, and her iPhone in her free hand. The Facebook app was opened, a random video playing lightly in the background. She was waiting for me. A pang of guilt strikes, as she waits for an answer expectantly. Was I going to lie to my mom? Was I simply going to brush me breaking curfew off,

saying it was a later Study Hall? Would I actually stoop so low? No. There might be the devil lurking on my left shoulder, but will I let that overpower my right? No. So I told her, I confessed to my mother, knowing that I would be grounded. It's time I start being honest. Now or never.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

Character. I watched as beautiful rays of color rose from the step my feet were balanced on. The projector once again displayed a vital moment where I began to learn my purpose. Where I began to realize who I was. I hear the cries of a child and my heart instantly warms. My vision becomes blurry as I choke up. I hear the cries of my child. Yet again, this story takes place in a hospital room. In my arms, a tightly wrapped newborn stays cuddled into my chest. It was at this monumental moment that I realized exactly what my purpose was. I learned the importance of giving rather than receiving. I was naturally born a caregiver, and once I realized this, I connected with myself on a different level.

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

Thessalonians 5:11