I believe in the importance of strong relationships. Not in the romantic sense but particularly family and friends. I grew up in a household with two busy parents that had two busy schedules. I am not upset about these busy schedules because they did so to provide for myself and my two older siblings. My mom worked two jobs and my dad has always worked weekends. Their work ethic has inspired me and the distance we had as a family has made me value strong relationships exponentially. The distance wasn’t ideal, of course I wanted the perfect family, doesn’t everyone? But with the perfect family I wouldn’t have valued the long nights of card games, home cooked dinners, and movie nights where dad inevitably fell asleep within the first five minutes. Distance made the moments together far more memorable than I could have imagined.

I believe in the importance of family because I live with not only my parents, but my grandparents. It was weird at first because my family moved into what I always knew as my grandparents’ house, which I was now supposed to call my own. Money was tight and my grandparents were getting older, so it made sense to live in one household but I was ashamed of my multigenerational home. The things we’re ashamed of as kids are the things we value the most later in life. Because of my multigenerational home, my relationship with my grandparents grew beyond belief and I see them now more as a second set of parents than grandparents. My multigenerational home is not something I am ashamed of anymore; it is something that just makes sense now, and frankly I would not want it any other way.

Like I said before, if you have the perfect family you do not always appreciate, and I think that same philosophy goes with lots of things. My health was one of them. I became chronically ill my sophomore year of college. Out of the blue and life changing. When nobody else understood how I was sick, because I did not look sick, or what they could to help, because there was no cure, my family was what held me together. Light hearted talks about my still prospective future and undeniable privilege in this world made a difference.

All my so-called ‘loses’ from the view of outsiders were true blessings from my point of view. But I often think, what if I didn’t have the luck of an average lower-middle class family with working parents and a pretty average life? Sounds weird when phrased that way, right? Without my family and friends who hold me together no matter if I need it or not, my life may be very different. I believe in strong relationships where there is no filter, you say what you mean and you mean what you say, because at the end of the day when you’re going down the list of quote on quote ‘friends’, they are the only people that undoubtable love and care for you, even if Facebook says differently.