My life challenges:

ADHD, Autism, PTSD, anxiety and depression.

Loss

Three days before my 17th birthday, my father died in a white-water rafting accident. He was a mountain of a man, and his loss was undeniably devastating for me and my mother. Later that year I was passenger in a massive car accident and almost died. Soon after, I was at risk of not being able to graduate high school.

I’d never taken school seriously at that point. I had average and below average grades and felt completely disconnected from everyone around me. Because of the trauma of losing a parent wasn’t something anyone could empathize with, people either treated me with pity or avoided me entirely. With little to no social life, and major depression issues forming around loss and social anxiety, I allowed myself to fall victim to drugs and addiction.

I was told, by my geometry teach, that there was no possible way for me to get the credits necessary to graduate. I took that as a challenge, rather than as a failure. I left the standard high school system and joined the alternative learning program in my town. Within 5 months I had accumulated more credits than I had in the previous three years. I went from the bottom of my class, literally I was 174th of 174 students in my graduating class, to graduating in less than a year’s time.

I have since also been diagnosed with ADHD and autism. That diagnosis was very hard to take, but I have since become more comfortable accepting how different my own experience is than that of a neuro-typical person, but it is a daily challenge to accept and love myself. Depression and anxiety are like that. A combination of personal grit and motherly love are likely how I’ve managed to make it as far as I have.

Every day can be a challenge, but sometimes it takes a difficult challenge for me to even attempt to do something, like I did with high school.