

***I loved my grippy socks.***

I was raised in an average family. Though my parents did everything they possibly could for me, as I grew older, I started to notice the lavish experiences I often missed out on. I did not always have extravagant birthday parties or frequent trips to Disney World like other kids. Sometimes, however, my brother and I would luck out and be taken to every child's dream place - Sky Zone. How could you hate it? Trampolines on the walls and floor as far as the eye could see, allowing you to jump away from everything you knew. I still remember the first time my parents brought us to such a magical place. I saw those orange-grip socks and believed it would forever be a symbol of endless fun. I fell in love with the bouncy feeling, so much so, I remember saving up for a trampoline of my very own, and with the help of my parents, finally bringing one home. I would wear my orange grippy socks and jump until the sun set every day. I was so free. I loved my orange grippy socks.

A decade later, I was handed a similar pair of orange grippy socks, but I didn't enjoy them nearly as much. A few things were wrong. One, they were given to me in the emergency psychiatric ward along with a pair of bland scrubs. Two, the orange was wrong; it was dull and unwelcoming unlike Sky Zone's. Finally, they meant I was put on a Form 1 - to be admitted to the adolescent psychiatric facility for at least a week. We weren't allowed shoes or our own pair of slippers (in case someone tried to use them to hurt themselves), so the only piece of cloth that protected my feet from the unforgiving cold floors of the hospital were my grippy socks. So I did what everyone else did and wore them. I didn't get much sleep that week. I stayed up pondering how the careless, ecstatic little girl who loved trampolines found herself in the dark rooms of the hospital after an attempt to take her own life.

Receiving the formal diagnoses was overwhelming and daunting to my fourteen-year old self, but I can not even fathom what it must have been like for my parents to hear. How could their problem-free, hard-working and otherwise seemingly content daughter be stifled with words like Major Depressive Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder?

These struggles set out to ruin many aspects of my life in the years preceding my attempt. I was tired in a way that only sleeping forever could fix; at least that's how it felt. I've always been a problem solver, and in my analytical teenage brain, it seemed to be the most rational decision.

I never let anyone see what was going on inside of my head. I have never been great at asking for help, so I fought my battle alone. To my parents, I was in my room studying more, when I was really crying, hoping this would not be my demise and that I would heal. To my friends, I was focusing more on soccer and staying off of my phone, when I was really avoiding telling them the truth that ate me up from the inside. Anyone in my life at the time would tell you that I would have been the last person they suspected to be struggling with mental illnesses. But then again, what does mental illness look like? Because I am not crazy. I get up everyday for school, I put on my non-grippy socks, and plaster a smile on my face. I do my homework, I take pride in my extracurriculars; on the surface, I am just another high school student. Regardless of the demons screaming from within me, you would only be met with my warm and greeting face. Perhaps one day, I will wake up and the battle between me and my chemical imbalance will simply disappear. Then I can be my joyful, childish self, bouncing off of trampolines and giggling endlessly. Until then, I urge you to check in on those around you, especially the happiest ones as the prettiest smiles do tend to disguise the deepest secrets. I hope I find my love for my old bright orange-grip socks without being reminded of the somber orange socks. Though they'll never be the same to me again, I truly did love my grippy socks.

- Harveen Grewal