Dear Diary,

It’s been a long time since I’ve caught up on a computer.

I’ve been journaling with a pen and paper for quite some time now.

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I’m sitting in my hostel room, or what will be my home for the next two + weeks.

My roommate Hailey is also journaling on her bed right now.

We just got high with Brianna and Michelle on the rooftop. We had to take a sketchy fire escape ladder to get up there for sunset.

It’s been a while since I’ve really caught up fully on a lot of my feelings, especially while high. So I think I’m going to take some time right now to really go through a lot of emotions and memories and current thoughts.

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I ended up driving around on my scooter last night and going to the night market, buying a lot of gifts, eating too much food / sweets, and then being too high and tired to journal when I got back so I decided to finish out the journaling today.

I’m sitting in an amazing coffee shop right now, and if I’m being honest there are only two things in this entire coffee shop that remind me I’m not in the US or that I’m not in a hipster coffee joint in Seattle…

1. The baristas are Thai
2. Everyone is barefoot (because they had to take their shoes off at the door… I’m just barefoot because I haven’t worn shoes since getting a tattoo)

It feels so comforting to be here. It is actually reminding me that it will be so nice to be in the comfort of home again.

I officially bought my flights home today. I know it isn’t the same feeling I’ll have when I get my tickets home to finish my travels for good… but it definitely feels strange to know that my time here in Asia has an expiration date on it.

The good news is that I know I’ll be back. I love it here too much to not come back.

I’m realizing there are so many things that I need to write down and so many topics I need to expand on to catch up from this last month of my life. I’ve written down quite a bit in my journal, but I think there is more to be said and a lot of side thoughts that will come up with every topic, which was why I thought it would be more fitting to type everything out and just allow my thoughts to take me where they need now as I digest my time here.

I think I’ll begin by creating a list of loose words, phrases, ideas, memories, thoughts, and notes that I can use as beacons to remind myself what I’d like to sort through.

* My eating disorder and relationship with food
* My relationship with drugs, alcohol, and caffeine
* My physical body
* Wesley
* Eric
* Mom and Dad
* Sam and Derek
* Claudia
* My future
* My mental body
* My relationship with yoga, and teaching yoga going forward
* Teaching in general
* Confidence
* What i want to continue
  + Tapas & mindful eating
* What i want to not continue
* My thoughts about travel
* Stress
* Acid Day
  + Confidence and nakedness
  + Death

**The Ol’ Eating Disorder**

To begin… the usual topic - my eating disorder and my relationship with food. It’s really interesting for me to write about this right now because I just read a bunch of diary entries from this time last year… March 2018. WOW was I in a different place in life back then!

It’s absolutely INSANE for me to think about how much I have changed and grown in just a year’s time. At this time last year, I was preparing to go to Escalante with Eric and dreaming about finally having a getaway from my apartment, from my pantry, from my overly rampaging food disorder, from my addiction to weed, from my fear of the dark at night, from my pessimism in the world, from my loneliness and depression… I was ready for *change*.

And in a way, that is what I got from that trip. I really could see a different side of myself coming out on the other end in the way that I wrote and in the thoughts that I had. There was a heightened sense of optimism that peaked out through the clouds of months of depression.

Now, here I am. Sitting in Koh Phangan, Thailand. Living Island life. Living on Island Time… and last night I overate.

Last night I was really high, and I ate two samosas. Then I went and got my beetroot, honey, and lime shake. Then I wanted banana bread, but since they were out I got a coconut muffin. Then I wanted more sugar… so I got a crepe. Then I wanted something substantial so I went to get a toastie… but I didn’t want meat or cheese so I got garlic bread. I wanted ice cream so I got a delicious ice cream bar.

I felt full after. I felt REALLY full after. I felt like I had eaten a lot of sugar. I was worried how I would feel in the morning…. But after reading some of the journal entries from last year I am realizing there are some fundamental differences between how I felt this morning and how I felt this time last year.

Last year, I felt like I was out of control. I didn’t think I was in charge of my actions. I could tell in my writing that I was aware of what I needed to do, and I was actually pretty spot on in my interpretations for why I thought I was doing what I was doing… and yet, I wasn’t able to take any of the right actions. I kept binging, I kept smoking, I kept relapsing, I kept up with the self hatred, I kept lying to people… I was in an endless cycle and I wasn’t sure how to break it.

Now, I know I am not in a cycle. I am **aware**. Of my thoughts, my emotions, my actions, my feelings, my needs, my *body*. I understand what is happening and I have shown up to the battle well equipped.

Last night, I overate. I was high and I hadn’t eaten much during the day so I was hungry. I felt impulsive at the food night market because I had access to so much cheap and enticing food. I was finally alone for the first time in a while, and I was excited that I could eat as much as I wanted. I was worried about overeating.

These emotions combined led me to eating too much: hunger, impulsivity, desire, excitement, and worry. All while being high and unable to process these emotions in a healthy way.

Now that I am sober and sitting here thinking about yesterday, I don’t feel regret. I think I would have last year. I might have restricted my eating last year. I might have puked this morning last year. I might have forced myself to workout too much last year.

Today, I went to ashtanga. I think in part I might have chosen a harder class to workout because of my overeating last night. But I didn’t restrict myself from eating breakfast. I haven’t felt weird or hateful or sad throughout the day. I am taking last night for what it was. Just as thoughts come and go in my head, or emotions surface and retreat in my body… last night was an action that came and went. There is nothing I can do to change it now, so it is up to me to decide how I will treat myself going forward.

I can choose to let these moments of ‘weakness’ or fear and overeating take control of my life again, or I can analyze them as I would a passing thought in meditation. I can see them for what they were, observe them, and choose to **not attach** to them.

Fuck.

It feels SO GOOD to be more aware of my mind, my thoughts, myself.

**Drogas, Bebes, y otras Café :)**

Ironically as I write this I am drinking my first cup of coffee in over a month. I must admit though, this is the slowest I think I have ever drank a coffee (especially an iced coffee) in my entire life. The drink feels thick in my mouth and strong on my tongue.

I feel a sense of mindfulness with every sip. I appreciate coffee for what it gives my body so much more than before. It is no longer a means to an end but instead an experience for my mind, my body, and my palette.

I am going to try to keep coffee out of my daily routine as long as I can. But, I do think that there are certain days and events where coffee will make sense to have. And it works as a wonderful treat to myself.

In terms of weed and drugs and alcohol… I think I need to write through this for a moment. I was initially expecting that after yoga was finished, I wouldn’t want to smoke weed for the rest of my life. I was expecting that I would become so enlightened that I wouldn’t feel the need to submerge my mind back into the fog of marijuana. The day after my graduation ceremony, I smoked weed. All afternoon and evening. Then the next day, I did it again. Then the next day, I bought my own and smoked all day with acid. Then the next day I smoked again. I’m going to smoke with friends this evening.

What does this mean?

The biggest differences I can tell immediately upon introducing weed into my life suddenly again:

* I feel a bit more groggy in the morning, have a harder time waking up
* My memory of what others are saying to me while high is little to none
* I have a worse memory in general about the day
* I feel like I am not fully present while high, or certain parts of the day after getting high the day previously
* I am so much more paranoid about how I look or what I am saying or being able to come up with something good to say in a conversation while high, but sometimes I’ll snap out of it and feel like myself again but just goofy which feels so great
* I am so much more likely to overeat when I am high, and I feel the compulsion to eat more food more than I have in a while
* My lungs and my throat feel different in the morning
* My eyes feel tired and dry in the morning
* Part of me wishes that I hadn’t smoked the night before
* Lack of energy and motivation to do things while high

So… what should I do?

I plan on smoking with friends tonight, and I was considering giving the rest of my weed away to Michelle or to Brianna.

I am not sure why I am having a hard time with that thought. I guess I would love to have access to cheap weed for the rest of my time here to allow myself to reflect and have beautiful moments with the sunset or having fun around the island while high. It is true that being high allows me to tap into my emotional body much more easily.

Unfortunately, I am worried about all of the negative side effects I immediately noticed after introducing weed into my body again. I know I’ll be smoking with Wesley, Claudia, Sam, and Derek, and Eric as well… so if I continue to smoke here, I will not be allowing my body any time to continue this detox until I leave for south america in May.

I will say though that I can tell my mindset is so different in comparison to how it used to be while smoking. I feel like I did when I used to smoke as a Junior in college. Yes, I do feel less motivated than when I am sober… but I feel like I have a fire inside of me that wasn’t there these last two years. I feel like I am forgiving myself and happy with myself and those around me. I am having a good time and not taking life so seriously. I am in tune with my body more.

I might take this time here to find ways to allow myself to play and have a good time, without negative thoughts or actions accompanying the beauty that can come from smoking weed (with myself or with others).

That being said, I am really going to focus on only smoking in the evening or at night. I want to try to avoid smoking too much and for too late, so that I don’t feel bad in the morning. I want to avoid smoking during the day so I don’t ruin or waste my evenings feeling groggy and burnt out. And I want to take a few days in between smoking as soon as my friends leave so that I can give my mind and my body a chance to reset and dispel the drugs from my system and come back to homeostasis.

In terms of alcohol… I have no craving to drink it. I don’t really know why I would. It doesn’t sound appetizing to me and it’s terrible for my body. I can handle being in situations while sober just fine now. And if I can’t, I’ll grow from the uncomfortability.

**My Physical Body**

I am SO IN TUNE with my body!!! All five of them actually:

* My anamaya kosha (physical body)
* My pranamaya kosha (energetic body)
* My manomaya kosha (emotional body)
* My vishnana kosha (wisdom body)
* My anandamaya kosha (bliss body)

I felt a change about half way through the second week of my yoga teacher training beginning to occur. My legs felt sweaty, but in a warm and blissful way. My lips began to tingle and taste like water and iron… I could feel hydration in my mouth through the taste of my lips. I felt like I was in a flow state as if I was doing a great workout… but just by being in my own body. I knew that change was afoot.

Then, throughout the second week and into the third week I really started to feel my muscles returning to their full strength, and my flexibility becoming more pronounced. I began to go to the front of the classroom to do yoga. I felt more motivated being in the front and was able to keep up with the class more easily. Then I started going to the front because I realized I had no one else to look at around me. I was able to close my eyes and become really *in tune with my body* throughout the class like I used to do at Spark Yoga. I started to tap into the roots of why yoga became so powerful for me in the first place.

I was able to hold poses for longer, I stopped wondering when I would be able to move and instead breathed into the burning sensation with a smile on my lips. I wished for more classes and felt energized with every step.

In week four I began to feel like the steps that I take throughout my day are the same as they are in a yoga class. I decided to teach my first class with the intention of mindfulness to embody this idea that is such a big part of my life. I can feel my body in every action that I take, I can feel my posture and how it affects my moods or interactions with others, I can feel my feet as they land lightly and controlled or firm and unstable. I can feel my muscles in my face when I am talking to another, and I can feel my control over them loosen when I focus more clearly on the other person. I can feel my bones stacking and working with or against one another in asana and throughout the day.

I have an urge to stay fit and active. I feel energetic and motivated to get up and do things for others.

I don’t feel lazy.

It feels FUCKING AMAZING.

Bhavana means more than cultivation. Bhavana in Hinduism means a building… like a temple.

I forever have bhavana on my body now. As a reminder to a lot of things.

My body is a temple.

I feel more than ever that I am treating my body like the temple it is. I am really doing a good job with mindfully eating and watching what I put in my body. I am doing a good job of observing my thoughts and not attaching to them as they come up in my non-physical mind. I am allowing emotions to engulf me, I am letting them surface and be felt when needed. I am speaking my truth. I am looking in the mirror and *admiring* myself. I see my muscles, my tan skin, my pubic hair, my armpit hair, my greasy hair, my dirty face with no trace of makeup… and I smile at the reflection.

I feed my body good nutrients and I feed my mind good thoughts.

I LOVE MY BODY. I love that my body is what attaches me to this world. I love that my body allows me to do what I want to do throughout my day. I love that my body allows me to be so in tune with yoga. I love that my body takes me where I need to go. I love that my body communicates with me and tells me what I am witnessing in the external world. I love my temple. I LOVE MY BODY.

More importantly…. I am not my body. This was one of the biggest moments for me throughout my time at One Yoga. When I was meditating one morning, I began to loosen control over my breath more than I ever had before. My inhales became short and shallow. My exhales almost nonexistent. I was worried that I wasn’t getting enough oxygen. I could feel my heart beat quicken as I felt my brain begin to tingle, but I persisted. I promised to simply observe. My breath naturally became more deep. I recieved the oxygen I knew my body needed. I realized that my breath would give my body what it needed when it needed it. I didn’t need to be there. It was my own fear of losing oxygen that quickened my heart rate… but had I trusted my breath and my body, my heart rate would have stayed the same.

My breathing was moving in and out of my body like a heart would pump blood. Breath was acting like another organ, inhaling and exhaling on its own. I didn’t have to have control over this system. I was merely an observer.

When I gave up control over my breath, I gave up control over my body.

I felt myself retreating into a place where I was not the body I inhabited. I was looking at my body, feeling what my body felt… but I was no longer in control. I didn’t need to be.

I was confused.

I felt the beginning of an ego death.

I wrote some beautiful poetry in my journal about my experience.

I wrote the following to conclude: “If I am not my body.. What am I?”

**Wesley, Eric, Mom and Dad, Claudia, Sam and Derek, etc…**

Starting with Wesley. He is the reason I bought my flight home today. I am ready to do some karma yoga with him. I am worried about him and I am worried about my ability to help him, but I know that when I was going through a hard time, it was connection with others that helped more than anything. For that reason, I know that Wesley will benefit just from having me around right now.

I’m going to spend a week with him, maybe even more. I want to be here for him and I want to share some of what I have learned with him. I don’t know what this means yet, and I am so scared because I don’t know what he needs… but I know that my time with him will be good for both of us. I don’t think anything could convince me to leave Asia other than being there for Wesley right now. I think I’ll have a lot more to say about this as I get closer to going back to the states, so I’ll write more about that later.

Eric seems to be doing a lot better than he was previously. I am so glad that he reached out to me and decided to start writing and trying to organize his life in different ways. I love helping Eric and being here for him. He reminds me of myself when I go through a hard time. He is very receptive to advice and help from others, and he is very selfless when it comes to being consumed by his own problems. Despite the inner struggle, he is always caring about what others around him need and what they are going through.

I am excited to spend more time with him at home too. Karma yoga in a different way.

Mom and dad. I think karma yoga will be a phrase I’ll use for my whole family. I would love to try the silent communication technique that George told the class about with turned backs and emotional release through listening and explaining our fears and problems with each other. I want to talk with her more about what we discussed in the summer and I want to be much more open and honest and vulnerable with her now that I have made so many strides while here. I wrote this extensively in my journal while on acid the other day, but I have fully forgiven my mom and I am feeling more love and connection to her than I have in a while. I am SO excited to see her again with this new mindset towards her (and myself of course!)

With dad, I am just so excited to share everything that I have learned. I feel like he will be incredibly receptive to a lot of the physical and mental aspects of yoga and I am so excited to give him the tools that he can use in his own life. I want to equip he and mom with the tools to also handle their interactions with each other better.

In general, when it comes to family I think I have a lot of karma yoga to do in terms of being there for them. I have a lot of teaching to do without turning it into preaching. I have a lot of knowledge to share and I have a LOT of LOVE to give them! I am ready to really focus on some good quality family time. To give undivided attention to my loved ones and to really be there for them.

Claudia. I am so excited to see Claudia again. I feel like I have such a greater clarity over our situation. I recognize my equal role in our drifting apart over the years. I realize my own jealousy reflected in my actions that influenced her actions. I recognize her as a beautiful person and I can’t wait to share with her everything that I have been going through. It’s going to be SO GOOD to see her again.

Sam and Derek. Here I’m going to have to focus a bit on setting my own boundaries. I’ll have to be very careful to set hard boundaries when it comes to food, exercise, and what I do with my day. I’ll have to set boundaries to make sure they don’t place me in a box where I can’t be the person that I have become. I’ll have to remind myself that I am not who I was when I was with them last. But most of all, I think I’ll have to not take myself so seriously. I think I just need to let go and have a good time with them. I didn’t get the chance to show this enough when I was in SLO because of the stress I placed on myself… now is the time to really allow my true and best self to show around them.

I already discussed my mental body quite a bit so I’m going to skip to yoga and teaching yoga going forward:

I FUCKING LOVE YOGA. God damn. Yoga is love. Yoga is life.

Yoga is UNION! Yoga is a practice. Yoga is self realization. Yoga is everything.

I know I am meant to teach yoga. After teaching my first class of yoga, I felt more in tune with this fact than ever before. Some of the students said I brought them to an out of body experience. Others said they did most of the class with closed eyes and experienced a side of yoga and their own bodies that they hadn’t tapped into before. Others said they were shocked I hadn’t been teaching yoga for years. Others said I was a natural. Some recommended I switch career paths. One person said I have a gift. Akari agreed.

I know that my own personal journey through understanding my body and my mind has equipped me with the tools I need to help others heighten their own awareness.

I felt so at ease while teaching. I felt like I knew so many things I wanted to say. I felt like I was a calming presence to those around me. I was finally given a blank slate in the form of a class full of eager students and I crafted a beautiful painting of words, emotions, feelings, and ideas.

I led the class in a moving meditation. I turned a class full of tired yoga teachers into an array of dancers, gently swaying in the water.

I know I am meant to teach yoga. Just as Peter told me I will be a public speaker, I know this to be true. Yoga will be my outlet for teaching and gaining comfortability speaking my truth with others and giving them a safe space. Then, I have a feeling that I will translate these skills into my teaching for university.

I don’t know if I’ll work in industry first for a while, do research for a while… or what my path will be. But I know that at some point in my life I am going to be a teacher. I am going to be a professor. I feel so much power at the front of others. I feel like I am my best self when I am a role model. I feel an external motivation like none other than I’ve felt before. I want to be my best self and shine my best light so I can share that light with those around me.

I plan to use teaching to inform. I plan to use teaching to raise awareness. I plan to use teaching to expand awareness. I plan to use teaching to heal myself. I plan to use teaching to heal others.

The first time my words have emotionally impacted others in a yoga setting was when I gave my centering in front of the class about being vulnerable. I opened my eyes afterwards and saw that Hailey had tears in her eyes. At that moment, I felt the impact of my actions at an unprecedented level.

I can utilize my own experiences in this life to allow others to tap into their bodies, to tap into their emotions, their memories, their habits, their pasts, their present.. I can GUIDE others to become their best selves.

Oh wow. I am SO SO SO SO SO grateful my journey has brought me here.

I manifested one of my biggest dreams in life! I became something I had assumed was only possible in a different life! I knocked down my own limiting beliefs and I ran for my dreams and caught them!

I am a yoga teacher!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I am happy beyond belief.

**Confidence**

Ooh I am so excited to talk about this topic! One of the biggest things I think I have noticed since my journey here on Koh Phangan… confidence. I actually want to talk about this with Ebba for a while before leaving here because I feel like she has played a huge role in my life in terms of confidence.

What is confidence to me?

* EYE CONTACT with others
  + While talking to them
  + While in their presence
  + Maintained
  + Genuine
* Saying what I want to say or need to say, and not second guessing it afterwards
* Having good posture!
  + I can not stress this fact enough. When my shoulders are back, my chest is out, and I am sitting or standing up straight, I feel 100% more confident than I would otherwise. I am really going to continue to work on my posture going forward. It makes all the difference in my interactions with others, because I feel more confident in my body and more in charge of my actions. I can physically feel my brain and my thoughts becoming more positive and confident as I change my posture.
* Dressing in a way that matches my true self.
  + This is something that I think I realized a while ago, but I need to dress externally what I would like to reflect internally. I can’t attach to my appearance, but I know that I will subconsciously act in a way that matches my external light. If I am dressed in sweats and a tee-shirt, with gross hair and feeling gross… I will not feel confidence in my interactions with others. If I dress for success, wear sexy underwear, wear hippie clothing, and feel FREE and LOVE the way that I look, I will share this LOVE with the people who I interact with.
* Confidence is the way that I felt that night in Pai after taking some shrooms and smoking with the group of strangers at Sunset bar. I felt like everything I said was the perfect thing to say. I felt like every story that came to my mind was exactly what the conversation needed. I felt no sense of uncomfortability or awkwardness. I felt beautiful and *wanted* by those around me. I felt powerful and in control of myself and those who sat near me. I felt like a contributor to everyone’s happiness but not responsibility for it. I felt like a fucking goddess.
  + THIS is the emotion that I try to tap into when I want to feel confident. Just as I would with a sankalpa in yoga nidra, CONFIDENCE is embodied by the feeling that I had during this moment in Pai. I will bottle this feeling up so that I can tap into it forever.

Confidence is very interesting for me because I feel like it has really made me realize how in control of my life I am. If I am in any given situation, I create my reality going forward.

I can choose to retreat, to worry, to feel awkward, to second guess, to be unsure, to be fearful… and to create the reality that those emotions cultivate.

OR, I can choose to say “fuck it”. I can choose to stand tall with shoulders back and chest forward. I can choose to maintain eye contact with beautiful people. I can share stories about myself, even through a red face. I can feel like I am making all of the right decisions and I can back up those decisions with a smile. I can be genuine and honest with myself and others. I can crave the unknown. I can put myself out there.

And I can soak up the amazing reality that I cultivate from those actions.

I feel like I am more myself than ever before when I feel confident.

Ebba has shown me the beginning of what I think I will call my goddess awakening. I know that I am tapping into a feminine side of myself I haven’t given a chance to see the light of day quite yet. This is IMPORTANT. My feminine self is the embodiment of the confident and beautiful woman I know I am becoming. I am so excited to keep using this toolbox going forward. I am so excited to take a sip from the bottle of confidence I keep in my mind every day. I LOVE where I am going with this.

**What I want to continue:**

* Tapas and mindful eating

This last week, I have dived into tapas a bit. I realized that I’ve done tapas throughout my entire life. More so than anyone else I know actually. My month long paleo diets, my workout promises to myself, my nightly rituals or morning rituals. I never realized I was exercising my will power.

I LOVE THAT.

This week I’ve been focusing on mindful eating. I made a tapas to try to set down my utensil in between every bite whenever I remember to do so until Brianna and Michelle leave. So far it has been a bit harder than expected. I don’t always remember to do it, and when I do sometimes I feel impatient.

But, I have noticed that I feel SO MUCH MORE FULL when I do follow through. When I look into my food and allow my body to see every bite. When I bless my food and take in all of the ingredients it took to make a dish. When I prepare my body for digestion by recognizing what I am consuming. When I slow down every bite so that it doesn’t feel like I am chewing in a rush. When I realize I don’t need to make eating something with a destination but rather a long and mindful journey for my mind and body.

I know I’ll continue tapas, and I really hope I continue mindful eating for the rest of my life.

* Playing and not taking life so seriously

This will be a bit harder as I become a professional again and start my academic career in August. I will say though that a life with low stress is SO much better for my body and mind. I can feel myself able to recognize my emotions so much better. This in turn lets me process them so much better. Which means I am nicer to my body and mind. I’ll talk about this more when I discuss stress here.

* Kriyas

Okay, so maybe I won’t be doing a neti pot every day… but I am going to make a HUGE effort to really take care of my body going forward. Brushing my teeth every morning and night, scraping my tongue in the morning, neti pot sometimes, cleaning my physical body when I don’t feel well, and trying to tap into what parts of my body need some extra care sometimes.

* FOOD

I plan to stay vegan in the states. I might choose to label myself as a vegetarian instead and be more relaxed about eggs and probiotic yogurt… but maybe I’ll label myself as a freegan. Where I don’t buy food unless it’s vegan. We shall see. Either way, I crave whole foods and healthy food in a way that I haven’t felt in a long time. It reminds me of summers at home where I really tapped into a motivation deep within to give myself nurturing ingredients and appropriate food portions.

* Courage and Confidence

Already spoke about this. Stoked to utilize it.

* Yoga philosophy

I’ll need to make sure that going forward I am spending time on a regular basis overviewing the philosophy concepts I learned during my time here and really embodying them in my life so that I can more easily teach them to others. The yamas and niyamas have really changed a lot of my outlook on life and karma. I do worry sometimes that karma is a motivator for OCD in my head… but I am being vigilant of this.

For example, now if I am about to make a ‘bad’ decision, I’ll think about the bad karma that might give me and I will be so OCD about not doing it. I think this can be both good and bad. I should really focus on trying to make decisions with good intentions and leaving any other external motivation aside.

Surprisingly, astea (non stealing) has been playing the biggest role for me. I think stealing comes in many forms, not just in the context of physical items. I have a heightened sense for my actions and how they might impact others. Yamas and Niyamas really help cultivate empathy.

**What I want to NOT continue:**

This one is a bit harder, because I am in such a good space mentally that I’m not thinking too much about bad actions, but I’ll say what I can:

* Losing control with food and giving in to impulsivity
* Judging my own actions in the past or judging others actions
* Second guessing my own confidence
* Being unhappy with my body
* Not loving myself fully
* Not giving myself time and space when I need it
* Not being honest with others and not speaking my truth

**My thoughts about travel!**

Wow. Travel is so transformative. I look back at my time in January and that feels like it was literally a different lifetime. I can’t believe that this has all been a part of the same trip. I can’t believe this has been a part of the same life. I can’t believe I am the same person I was then… probably because I’m really not.

Travel so far has taught me how to interact better with others, how to be my true self, how to LOVE my true self, how to have no inhibitions, how to not self edit, how to do what I need to do, how to follow what I want to do (when it is good for me, my body, and those around me), and how to live every day as if it was my last.

Travel has guided me to a place where I’ve realized that I definitely want to get a PhD. It has made me realize I want to go to Colorado. It has made me excited for those things. It has made me realize the role of yoga in my life and how I will influence others with yoga. It has guided me to a place of understanding for others around me and for my place on this planet. I have such a heightened sense of self awareness. I want to help others. I want to volunteer. I want to make a difference. I want to be good to myself. I want to love myself. I want to love others. I want to LIVE my **best life**.

Travel has made all the difference for me. Combining this trip so far with yoga has been exactly what I needed on my path. I have found the answers I needed and I have detached from the ones I haven’t yet received. I am gliding through life with happiness, joy, and love.

I can’t believe that I’ve been traveling for two and a half months. I am so excited to spend another two weeks here and I am SO EXCITED to go home and spend time with friends and family! I love that I’ll finally get to spend time with them while I’m on vacation. I can do whatever I want to do and I can be fully present for them. I can’t believe my trip isn’t even half way over yet. In fact… it’s only about ⅓ done. After home, I’ll be in south america for at least 2 and a half (if not 3) months! That’s longer than I’ve been in Asia so far!!!! Holy shit!!!!!!!!!!!

Wow, I just came to this realization… I didn’t notice that until now but fuck. I have a feeling south america is going to be an entirely different experience than Asia has been, but I know that I will learn and grow SO MUCH while I am there. I will finally be chasing another dream of mine, to immerse myself in south american culture and to learn Spanish.

This year is really about finally following through with my dreams. I guess I didn’t realize until now, but damn. When I enter my PhD program, I will have done the things that I told myself I needed to do in life. I will have showed up for myself. I will have done it.

I’ll have solo traveled. Volunteered abroad. Taught yoga abroad. Learned Spanish. Traveled in Thailand and Asia. Became a yoga teacher. Traveled in South America.

I will have done it all!!!!!

My heart is SO FULL. I have so much happiness for myself and my actions and what I’ve done to get myself here. I am so grateful for what others have done to help get me here.

**Stress**

I have really realized while traveling that the biggest instigator for stress in my normal life is myself. I place too much pressure on myself to accomplish big goals, either far in the future or in more of a tapas (daily setting). I have a passion for side projects, but I stress when I don’t make my own deadlines. I think going forward, I am really going to make sure to control my stress levels more than ever before. Cortisol is SO BAD for my body, and I can’t live with the levels that I had for the last five years if I am going to be entering a PhD program.

I try to tap into what I learned in the Courage to Be Disliked. Everyone has their own reactions (states?) of being when they take in information. For example, if I don’t finish an assignment exactly in the way someone was hoping… they will have their own personal reaction. But I am **not responsible** for that reaction. I am only responsible and able to change my own reactions to things. I can do my best to be a good person and be responsible in life, but I can’t change others. I am not responsible for other people’s happiness and I can’t assume what others want or need.

In the past, I have taken on a huge burden trying to please others while only using my own version of what they need in mind. Instead, I am going to try to have more difficult conversations. I am going to get to the core of what people want and need so that I can do my best to help deliver that. And if (when) I can’t, I am going to live with that, and I won’t allow myself to stress over it.

Getting a PhD is like college, take 2. But this time I know everything that I wish I had known five years ago. I know how to deal with stress and not let it consume me. I know what my body and mind needs to be healthy. I know how to organize my life and my activities in a way that allows me to actually finish what I seek out. I know how to fit a million things into one day, even when it seems impossible. I know how to take breaks and when I need to take breaks. I know the things that I should waste time doing and the things that are good to put time into. I know the people and environments that I should surround myself with to help me become the best person that I can be.

I feel an excitement for going back to school *way* more than I was expecting. It feels like I got the part in a play that I auditioned for. I am feeling so called and drawn to this.

**Finally - Last But Not Least…. The *Acid* Day**

* **Confidence and nakedness**
* **Death**

First of all, I have to say that taking acid with Ebba, Michelle, Hailey, and Brianna on Monday was one of the craziest days of my life, if not the craziest day of my life.

We started off the day in a circle on the bach, holding hands and chanting om together to bring in positive energy. We all shared our intentions with each other. We all placed totems on the blanket, there were stones that represented the chakras, incense burning, and palo santo placed among a bed of shells, stones, dream catcher earrings, moonstones, and other spiritual objects.

We all sat naked on this tapestry and breathed in each other’s energy as we took sips of acid mixed with redbull.

Then, we all went our own ways and began to meditate and do yoga on the beach. I began to journal about mom. I wrote down how I had forgiven her. I realized that I forgave myself, which was why I was finally able to forgive her. I wrote down how much love I had for the both of us, and how that love was so intertwined and impossibly connected.

I covered myself from the sun and shielded my skin from the light.

I realized I felt much more comfortable being shielded. As people began to show up to the beach, I felt even better that I was covered. I was being painted by Brianna and realized how unreal it was that we were a group of attractive women, painting each other’s naked bodies on a public beach. As I embodied the medicine woman, I realized I loved that role. I loved providing what other people needed and always having the right object or thing to say. I loved being there for others.

Then as ebba became more lost in the sauce after smoking weed, I loved how much she began to let go. She was crouching on the rock holding her mango and worshipping her mango and I fucking loved how much she was letting loose.

Everyone else was walking around naked, but I felt afraid. I was afraid to take off my clothes again. More people were on the beach now. I didn’t know how to get myself to take them off to go in the water and wash my skin so I could reapply sunscreen. I knew I needed to.

I told myself when the time was right I would do it.

I was given a tomato by Brianna. When she handed it to me, it felt like medicine. I looked longingly into the veins that seemed to be pulsating from the depths of the vegetable. (fruit?) I realized that it too, was alive just as the Mango in Ebba’s hands had been. I wanted to save it in my medicine cabinet for the right time. Part of me knew that it was holding me to my clothing and keeping me from letting go. Then, when Michelle came back from the water, I handed it to her. I said that it felt like it was time to give it away.

Immediately, I took my clothes off and walked towards the water. I had let go of the tomato, I had let go of my inhibitions and limiting beliefs. I felt courageous and powerful.

That was when I really began to realize that confidence plays such an important role in my personality and in my life.

It was SO LIBERATING to be naked on that beach and to be natural, in my own body with others around.

I began to really focus on my femininity and its importance in my life as well. I can tell that I am beginning what will be a long journey to fully embody the goddess that I know myself to be.

Another big moment for me was in the water after feeling liberated from taking my clothes off. I took off the mask to breath better, and floated in the waves. I was having trouble setting aside thoughts about a komodo dragon coming and killing me. Or a shark coming and eating me. I was feeling so strained from these thoughts that I wasn’t able to relax into the waves. Then, I took a piece of what Ebba and George had spoken about last week. I decided to spend a minute just being okay with death.

I told myself that if I was to die from a komodo dragon right now, then that is what would happen. I told myself, that theoretically I was going to die right then. And I had a minute to be okay with it. I layed in the waves, and felt them take me in a direction that I couldn’t recognize. I felt my muscles relax. My tension release. I closed my eyes and floated just below the surface of the water. I released my breath. If I was to die at that moment, I had to be fully okay with it.

I fought the thought. I fought the feeling. I struggled with my mind.

But, for just one moment. I felt … at peace.

I was ready to die in that moment. I was okay with death. I was welcome to it. I was detached from it. I was everything and nothing at once. I was content.

The moment was quick, and followed by more strain from my own mind… but it was the beginning of a powerful feeling.

I am excited to speak about it more with Ebba. But I definitely see a huge benefit in finding solace with death after that short experience.

Those were the biggest takeaways from the day. So I don’t forget, here are some more memories from the rest of the day:

* Going into the forest behind the beach dressed like the medicine woman (without a boob hanging out this time! lol), with my red, purple, and green chakra rocks (woah… I just realized I had the green rock for myself which was the anahata rock!!!) and palo santo
* I had a moment with Hailey where I told her that I felt the urge to share my story with her and to hear hers because I felt like we have a lot in common
  + She started to cry and I hugged her. We had a moment where we hugged for a long time and breathed into each other in the way that Claudia and I had in Pai months ago now.
  + I wasn’t sure if I felt a romantic love for her in that moment, but it was a lot of love nonetheless, it confused me a bit actually.
  + I felt POWERFUL and in control of the emotions around us.
* Brianna showed up during the hug and showed me the monkeys that were playing on the other side of the abandoned house!
* We listened to the monkeys in the forest and watched the pony from down the hill. I performed a palo santo ceremony and cleansed the energies around Brianna and Hailey. I felt like a fucking goddess and spiritual guide in that moment.
* I stood in the meadow, with my om necklace against my forehead, taking everything in as brianna photographed and drew me.
* I cleansed the air of the clearing with palo santo and felt like the man that I had been watching while tripping on acid at Lightning in a Bottle, cleansing the space of the creativi’tree’. I felt like I was embodying him. I realized that he and I were one. I realized that I can create spiritual spaces and experiences for others in this moment. I felt like a spiritual guide more than ever before. It was calling me and I was answering the call.
* I let Ebba and Michelle get away from the bad energy and packed everything up eventually.
* I left a blessing (an orange) in the beautiful beach facing bungalow on our way back.
* I felt like everything I was doing was right, every action was beautiful, and everything I needed was always right at my fingertips.
  + It was partially a mindset of being happy with everything, but I also was shocked that everything I needed was always right where it needed to be. It felt fucking amazing.
* We went to the beach and I bought a coconut and mango for Ebba and michelle
* We met them at the waterfall and it was the most beautiful sight to take in. It was the picture perfect waterfall I had always dreamt of playing in and the cold water was EXACTLY what my skin wanted to feel.
* We all got naked and sat in the waterfall holding hands singing om together. I opened my eyes underwater to clear out my manipura chakra. I drank the clean water, not caring what was in it.
* I lost the rolling papers but remembered that I could make a pipe out of an apple, and made a perfect pipe with the last apple that remained!
* I went boulder hopping with Brianna and it felt SOO GOOD. It made me want to rock climb again.
* Found the tree goddess and placed my hands on her trunk. Really breathed into her and had a moment. I think feminine energy was given to me in that moment.
* Saw the moon rise and breathed that energy in.
* Had an AMAZING drive back home, the wind felt like a warm hug the entire ride. Brianna and I enjoyed each other’s company
* Went to the night market with everyone, ate probably a bit too much but still felt so good.
* Went to the tattoo shop and watched Ebba and Michelle get tattoos. Saw Hailey get her first tattoo.
* GOT MY FIRST TATTOO.
  + Bhavana.
  + The place that Akari said I took the students to during my first class as a yoga teacher. She said bhavana is “The deepest feeling in the moment! The feeling that you had in your practicum throughout xxx”
  + Bhavana in Buddhism means cultivation or development of something. It is usually used with other words to denote the cultivation of that thing, but on it’s own it represents spiritual manifestation. It highlights that this journey never ends and we are always striving to improve ourselves and to work on becoming our best self.
  + Buddha himself used this word to represent hope. In a field that seems to be in the worst conditions, it can always be cultivated in some way. There is always hope. I think the same is true for me. No matter where I am in life, no matter what condition I am in, there is always hope.
  + Bhava itself means to arouse mental states, which is also what Akari said I did with the class. I helped the class tap into their manomaya kosha and encouraged them to really FEEL. To feel what their body needed, to feel what their body was doing, and to feel their breath with their movement.
  + Bhavana also signifies contemplation, and in some languages it means literally meditation. I love this idea because I find that my life has become increasingly focused on contemplation, and it is meditation that has allowed me to raise my self awareness in order to continue further on my spiritual journey.
  + In Hinduism, Bhavana means a building… specifically a temple. This is one of my favorite parts about having this word on my body forever. MY BODY IS A TEMPLE. I will always have a reminder of this now.
  + I chose to not get the word in sanskrit because I wanted to resonate with every definition of the word. One sanskrit word doesn’t embody all of the buddhist ideals or all of the definitions I said above. I wrote down bhavana many times on a piece of paper. One of them looked better than the rest. Michelle said it looked great. I showed the artist, we bargained to have it done for 1600 bath ($50) with a bamboo stick.
  + I got it.
  + IT HURT.
  + But I looked in Ebba’s eyes the whole time and her stories and gaze distracted me enough.
  + The v in the middle of the word will remind me of the five of us on our journey on Monday and in our journey in life.
* I FUCKING LOVE THESE GIRLS.

I am still processing what happened on Monday, I will never forget it.

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Wow. Okay. 21 pages later… I think I can officially say that I have caught up with my thoughts at least a little bit. I still want to reflect on my thoughts towards things in life in regards to travel and a changing mind like I started at the beginning of these travels, but I think I’ll do that in my paper journal. I also want to find a way to transfer my paper journals into here so that I can more easily take in all of my thoughts, memories, and changes at the same time when I look back at certain years or months in the future.

It was so powerful to look at this time and where I was at just last year, I can’t imagine what it will be to look back at this time in years to come.

Travel is so powerful. Yoga is so powerful. LOVE is so powerful. Life is amazing. Life is blissful.

Life is love.

I am god.

I am **LOVE.**

**I am freedom.**

**I am light.**

**I AM.**

**And baby, it feels SO good.**

~ Jess

Age: 22