Dear Diary,

Wow I am incredibly enlightened and I actually have tears in my eyes. I was just rereading an old diary entry from the fifteenth of January, this year. I actually wrote in the last paragraph, and I quote:

“I am learning that loneliness doesn’t have to be a sad or bad feeling.”

THAT IS EXACTLY THE SAME THOUGHT THAT I WAS SO OBSESSED WITH IN SHERRY TURKLE’S BOOK!!!! I already had that same revelation even months before I actually read the book! I can’t believe I completely forgot.

The quote, from Sherry Turkle’s book *Reclaiming Conversation* talks about how we equate loneliness and solitude together because our inability to be alone has forced us to be unable to tell the difference between the two. This is a bad thing because loneliness is considered to have a bad connotation, while solitude is a more positive approach to the ability and want to be alone. If we think they are the same though, then there is a negative attitude towards being alone always. We as humans need solitude, and even loneliness, in order to grow into better and more self aware people.

I have forced myself to take more moments of reflection and awareness inside of me. I’m really starting to learn so much about myself. I don’t need to keep the same identity that I have in the past just to let my friends stay comfortable. It might be harder to stay so close with certain people if I change myself, but it will allow me to be closer finally with myself.

I don’t need my hair anymore.

I am willing and wanting to try to experience everything in life. This could range from travelling anywhere to doing different drugs and spending time with any person.

But even better than that, I am in control of my own life. I’ll do everything that I want to, and I know which things aren’t worth the emotional or physical effort that I will be putting into them.

I am getting closer and closer to being the positive person that I want to be. I know I am already incredibly positive and optimistic, but I still have so much more to learn. I want to not only be able to say and begin to think of everyone in good light, but I want to fully feel those thoughts with every word that I speak. I want to love myself as much as I love others. I want to understand and be able to empathize with every person that I cross paths with. This is the path towards finding my own light. As I get more comfortable with myself, I will no longer have to bring others down for my own selfish reasons. I’ll be able to be truly and honestly happy for others under every circumstance. Because I’ll appreciate them as their own humans. I’ll be able to sincerely experience their lives through their eyes just with my thoughts, and through that I will want them to be the happiest they can be.

It is ironic though. I am wanting them to be happy and successful simply so I can be able to feel the same happiness they feel. I am letting my own emotional self feed off of their happiness.

But then again, that’s almost like magic. In theory, I get to feel as happy as the happiest person in the world can - without having to do anything but empathize with them.

With great highs though, there comes low valleys.

I feel myself empathizing more with people who are experiencing difficulties in life as well. This is good for the friends that I am around in my immediate spheres of college. But, as I expand further into the world and travel and meet new people, I’ll be hearing stories of incredibly and indescribably saddening childhoods. I am going to need to find a better way to cope with sadness and emotions that are being felt from stories if I want to not be caught too off guard.

I think it’s still important to hear stories from others though. I need to understand what people around the world are going through and have gone through. It will definitely bring up so many questions within myself though for why I do or don’t deserve to have been born with the incredible luck and opportunity that I have.

I don’t take advantage of my luck enough. I need to grasp life more often and with a tighter grip. I think this summer is going to be a great opportunity for me to finally do that.

I need to mature a little bit more. I need to continue to grow stronger within myself, but I need to constantly assess myself in that process. There is so much potential for me and for my life trajectory, and this is the perfect time to start really taking advantage of it.

I hope to learn more than I ever have before during this summer. This includes learning in the fields of web development, entrepreneurship, business, working and having a daily job, social skills professionally, social skills privately, meeting new people, taking time to myself, being productive alone, learning more about myself, amongst I’m sure many more things.

I see this summer going very well for me. It’s just going to take some work and action. But I’m ready for it.

I’m scared.

But it’s okay.

I’m going to use that to fuel me.

It’s better to not think about it too much. I think I’m going to try to get back to packing.

I’ll let you know how it goes.

Love,

Jessie J.

Age 20