Growing up with parents from two different countries, I would move around a lot. We lived in the United States, but every now and then we would go to France to visit family there. I never really saw the ocean where I lived; in Chicago there was only the lake, which was polluted beyond repair, and in New York there were only the rivers. But every time we went to France, we would be close the ocean. It was always something that amazed me, the ocean, and I don’t know why. Seeing the sun reflect of the surface of the water and the waves hitting the beach, I wanted to get a closer at it.

The first time I showed my interest in a body of water was when I was about two years old; my grandparents used to own a house that had a pool in the suburbs. I don’t really remember much of that time, but my parents told me I always wanted to go swimming; that I would jump in the water and swim around naturally. I was told I would do this over and over again.

So, going back to the ocean, I set my sights on completely submerging my body in the cold water of the Atlantic. I couldn’t shake the idea from mind. Stepping on the beach I felt the coolness of the water in the sand, a lingering presence that never left. I take off my clothes and right away go for a swim in unknown territory. The tide was low that day so it was a long walk to the water. Finally at the base of the ocean, I tested the temperature of the water; I felt a cool sensation running up my legs. But the water was just right; it wasn’t too cold where one couldn’t stay in the water and risk getting hypothermia, but it was cool enough to relax one body in summer heat.

Little by little, I would walk further and further into the water. When the water was up to my waist, I could barely move because the water was so cold. With the waves hitting me one after the other I got used to the water very quickly and started swimming. I wasn’t scared or anything, I felt at peace, I felt like I could stay in the water for hours without interruption. There was something about the water that made me at peace, but I still don’t know what it is. I felt untouchable and safe; it was like a mother’s embrace. I was told the ocean was dangerous and unpredictable, but I felt in control. It was the first time where my body and soul were in complete sync. I was free of worry, free of problems; nothing could ruin my moment with the ocean.

I’ve always the seen the ocean as a safe haven. I lose myself in the water; I go to a place that is indescribable. I believe if I had restricted access to the ocean I would be a completely different person.

The ocean offered many opportunities to try different activities. I’ve tried surfing, water-ski, sailing, and fishing. Although none of these particularly interest me, I’m still able to be close to the ocean. That’s all that matters.

The ocean is peaceful and calm. Because of this I’ve adopted the peaceful nature of the sea. It washes away all of the pain and all of the stress.