As someone who has always had an interest in Astronomy, I have always found black holes to be interesting. In fact, I like to imagine that if one day I fulfill my lifelong dream of becoming an Astronomer, my area of research would either be cosmology, black holes or dark matter. In layman’s terms, black holes are objects in space which have such a strong force of gravity that nothing can escape them, not even light. This means that as soon as anything approaches a black holes event horizon (the area around the black hole where its gravitational pull begins to affect objects) it gets sucked in. When a stars fuel is used up and the energy flow from its core stops, it dies. During the death of a star, some nuclear reactions outside the core cause the dying star to expand outward (known as the ‘red giant’ phase) until it inevitably collapses in on itself. If the mass of the star is relatively low, it will form a White Dwarf. If the mass is large, the dying star may form a Neutron Star. If the mass of the star is very large, however, it collapses in on itself to form a black hole. Because the gravitational pull of black hole is so strong, they may literally devour other objects in space, like stars or planets.

When an object, for example a star, gets close to black hole, the gravitational pull on the star is a lot stronger on the side closer to the black hole, so gravity stretches it and pulls it apart. The best way to imagine this is that the black hole would literally glow around its event horizon, as the star is stretched and pulled apart. In his 2014 movie Interstellar, Christopher Nolan provided viewers with an idea of what this would look like visually. On April 10th 2019, scientists managed to capture the first ever image of a black hole. This took the collaboration of many different experts. The image confirmed that previous artistic depictions of black holes, including Christopher Nolan’s, were accurate. One of the things I have always wondered about is what would happen if a person fell into a black hole. Similar to a star, the person would be stretched and pulled apart across the event horizon, known as spaghettification. Some scientists even joke that the person would be able to the back of his/her own head during this process, if they didn’t die yet. Some people even theorize that black holes are portals to other dimensions. However, the thing we can all agree on is that if someone were to fall into a black hole, they would lose themselves. Sometimes, I think that I’m like a black hole, because it feels like when people get close to my event horizon they get pulled in, and lose themselves.

Let me start off by saying that I don’t think I’m a bad person, per se. Generally, I don’t think that most people are exclusively good or bad, especially not in relationships. Everyone has some toxic traits, some of which are more noticeable than others. For example, some people may be physically/emotionally abusive. Some people have commitment issues. Some people have trust issues. The problem with dating is that not everyone is aware of their toxic traits and we therefore go around with all these unresolved issues jumping from one relationship to the next, spreading hurt like an epidemic. Even though I haven’t been in many relationships, I figured out my toxic traits early on. Jealousy, insecurity and possessiveness just to name a few. A close friend recently asked me why I get jealous and insecure. I smiled, because I have asked myself this exact question many times before. I don’t think that I’m a very intelligent person, but I feel as though I have a pretty solid understanding of the world around me and a decent, albeit amateur, understanding of the cosmos above. Despite this, I struggle a lot when it comes to understanding the universe that exists inside me, this lack of understanding of my internal existence is perhaps one of my biggest weaknesses.

Even though I still don’t understand why, I have spent a lot of time working on myself (as people say) trying to let go of these toxic traits. For the most part, I think I’ve gotten a lot better over the years. But I don’t think it will ever be truly gone until I begin to understand exactly why it’s there in the first place. The dangerous thing about these traits is that they’re not always explicit. For example, if I’m beginning a new relationship with someone, the jealousy may first come across as cute. I think that what also draws people in is the fact that when I love, I love hard, one might even say I over-love. And so these traits may come across as simply part of all the love I give, as minor red flags. But I have literally watched these traits infect people I love and saw the effects it has had not only my relationships but the people I’m in them with. It changes them, even if they won’t admit it themselves. I wouldn’t say that they become unhappy really, just different. They don’t smile the same, they don’t laugh the same and it’s really hard to think that someone you love has changed so much and you’re the reason why.

Although the general idea is that nothing can escape a black hole, Prof. Stephen Hawking once said that things can get out of a black hole, so no matter how hopeless you feel about your current situation, you should hold onto the belief that things will get better. This holds true for people who manage to escape me. Despite the hurt I caused by leaving, I have literally seen her flourish once I was out of her life, more than once. And although she may be a bit different, and things may not be perfect in her life, she definitely seems to be doing better without me around. This may sound like a depressing point of view, but Stephen Chbosky once wrote that if you care about somebody you should want them to be happy, even if you wind up being left out. How do you look at the love of your life and tell yourself it’s time to walk away? I don’t know which is harder – choosing to walk away because you feel you’re not good for them, or having to stay away because they don’t seem to have place for you in their lives anymore. I haven’t quite figured out that part yet, but until then I’ll keep popping pills and smoking trying to numb the pain that I know will never go away. As I try to move forward, I will try to find some solace in the words of Kid Cudi when he said *All along, I knew I was meant to be alone, out there out on my own.*