

Amanda Galindo

Indira Hood-Esparza

Humanities

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(CUE IMAGE OF COLORFUL HEAD)

I am the most independent person I know. I strive to accomplish this sense freedom **every single day** without even realizing. **(PAUSE)** I'm always on top of what I want to do. I got my license and my job the second I got the opportunity. I decided my life long career in 7th grade, which I still work towards everyday. However,**(PAUSE)** I can't help but feel as though I'm not doing nearly as much as I should to achieve my goals. I feel as though I have wasted my potential.

Nothing bothers me more than relying on other people. In all honesty, at this point in my life, I feel like I'm better off without my family. Being one that prides myself on being independent and self sufficient, I must always show strength and always at least look like I have my shit together. This means that I really care about what people think of me, I hate to say it but I really do. I would rather make people believe that I am capable of anything, but I know in reality,**(PAUSE)** I'm not. I carry this mindset in almost anything in my life, that in

order to succeed in life I must accomplish everything myself and only myself. That asking for help is the same as cheating my way through.

(CUE IMAGE OF YOUNG AMANDA AND MOM)

I've portrayed this self independence for as long as I can remember. My parents divorced when I was three years old. I'm happy that it happened, they just weren't meant to be together. I understand this. I now know this time was the bloom of my self sufficiency. My parents split really benefited everyone in the family in some form. But the negative seemed to outweigh the good. I feel as though I was left behind,(PAUSE) that each one of my siblings have formed a sense of a family but I don't have a single memory of my parents happy together, or even my entire family happy together. All I know are the very biased and brutal stories they tell me full of spite for one and other.

(CUE IMAGE OF YOUNG AMANDA AND FAM)

My very first ever memory was asking my soon to be divorced dad when he was finally going to leave the house. Even as a young child, I must have sensed the tension in our home and throughout my family. Now, the only relationship my mom and dad have with each other are their fights over the phone or the words they say to each other through me. I hate seeing my "parents" like this. I don't

expect them to be together but at least be able to portray some example of good communication.

I really admire how my mom navigated life throughout their divorce. She prioritized my siblings and I, always putting us first. My mom was dealing with a lot, leaving a 20 year long marriage full of trauma and pain, she worked worked a full time job with hours of overtime and was taking care of a 4 year old, 7 year old and two teenagers. She would wake up at 3am to make it to work at 4, just so she could be the one to pick me up from pre-school. She so desperately tried to create a sense of family for my siblings and I. But she failed. This is strength and strong will is what I try to embody every day.

I believe my mom is the reason why I am the way I am. I thank my dad for making us like this. I think I embody who she would have wanted to be throughout her life, what she could have been. Although it hurts to see my parents be so stubborn and spiteful, it has taught me one thing. **This** is exactly how I don't want to end up. Stuck in one place raising children and dealing with not only my own struggles and problems, but theirs as well. My life just wasted to do the same repetitive things every single day without recognition. Yet in a way I'm already doing this now..

My parents never seem to give me any sense of validation, only when I over hear my mom on the phone talking to her friends “Amanda gets all straight A’s,” “Oh yeah, Amanda is in Honor classes, she has a job! She’s just doing so well!” (PAUSE) I came to a realization that the validation I so deeply rely on, (PAUSE) I only get from myself. (PAUSE) Coming home at 11:30 on a school night to an empty dark living room, I eat my dinner **alone** and work on my homework surrounded in complete silence, I desperately try to push myself to stay awake. I end up finishing my work around 2am to 3am on average depending on the workload. Eventually, I tensley force myself to sleep knowing I have to wake up in few hours, these hours feel like minutes. Most nights I eventually I find myself still awake as the sun rises, this frustrates me. “ Why can’t I just sleep!” I ask myself. Then do it all again. Everyday, about 5 times a week, every week. An endless cycle that carries through to the weekend. This is where I get my validation, from myself. It’s like I’m addicted to this feeling of “accomplishment” and struggle. I genuinely like the feelings of stress I feel at these times. The only way I feel accomplished is by pushing my limit. This is my unhealthy way of receiving my validation. The validation that I can't seem to find anywhere else. My mom has no idea that this is my daily routine, (PAUSE) I think she’d get upset at me if I told her my schedule. Which is understandably unhealthy for anyone, but

me. But I'm different, I can handle anything, I am hardworking and there is no one in the position to tell me otherwise.

The less work I do or the less shifts I have, the worse I feel.(PAUSE)

Getting a call telling me my shift is cancelled, feels like feel like the ultimate pain.

I didn't even realize this until I was about to leave to work one day only to find out my shift was cancelled as I was walking out of the door. I was furious. I couldn't stand to be at my house so I walked out with tears in my eyes and sped off in my car. I felt kinda silly after this but it made me wonder. How could something like this affect me. I'm letting a fucking part- time job determine how I view myself.

I never let my feelings get the best of me. I like to think anger is an emotion I don't carry and I definitely take everything with a grain of salt. I only highlight the positive in a situation and I've really worked on myself to get to this point. I worked to this point to not be like my family, always so negative. I feel as if I'm stuck in their cycle, it feels like I can't escape who I'm meant to be.

I see characteristics of both of my parents throughout my personality, almost as if their habits were passed down to me the moment I was born. As if when I was formed in my mother's womb the two sets of Chromosomes from each pair of my mom and dad, exchanged pieces of DNA, which then created hybrid chromosomes. Overpowered what was supposed to be mine. My parents past and

personal relationship reflect my personal life and most importantly my outlook on life. I like to think that this has made me wise, especially for my age, and I believe I have a pretty strong head on my shoulders.

I gained my independence, my strong will and perseverance more so from my mom. Along with those characteristics, I got her tendency to push away my emotions or struggles by adding more onto my plate to distract myself. My mom is a very busy and hard working woman. Mirroring her, I am as well.

I see a connection to my moms past experiences to my perspective on life now. Throughout my moms 20 year marriage to my dad, not only did she face verbal and physical abuse throughout her married years, she also faced unfaithfulness. My father cheated on my mom over 30 times. Why would I ever put myself at risk of this? Risking throwing my fucking life away. Just to spend the rest of my days raising children and having to deal with the man who caused it. Not until just recently did I make a connection of this specific time in my mother's life to myself and my deep fears of life.

I fear that I will waste my life on someone. (PAUSE) I just don't think it would be possible for me to see what good could come out of it. Commitment is my greatest fear, in all aspects of my life. I am terrified that any connection I make throughout my life would turn me into my parents. Just to have all of this

emotional exposure wasted or used against you. I never thought that my parents divorce would have ever have had an affect on me, and more so on how I make my decisions. How could something I can't even remember determine who I am? More so this fault is within myself. Why am I letting my parents experiences influence mine?

(CUE PIC OF MOM AND UNCLE)

My older siblings have resentment towards my brother and I because we were given almost everything we could have wanted as kids. I think my mom was trying to fill the void of out missing father figure. However, I'm jealous of my siblings and I can admit that. I'm jealous that they were able to be raised by two parents, although very much toxic, it's still a family that I will never be able to experience. My dad destroyed the feeling of that family. I'm jealous that they were with my grandma longer than I was, before she died. I'm mad at my grandma for having had skin cancer. I'm upset that they didn't have to deal with my uncles suicide in the magnitude that I did. I'm mad that they don't carry the haunting thoughts of the man that substituted my father when he didn't have the decency to be in my life. I'm so mad that my uncle committed suicide. I'm mad at everyone for not knowing what he was going through, but above all I'm mad at myself. Now here I am still so mad, and still not able to get over it. Why can't I just get over it? What should I

even try. I'm mad that my parents raised siblings that don't connect with each other. I'm tired of desperately trying to be positive, just so i'm not like the rest of my family. I'm tired of not dealing with the bad things in my life. But I just don't know how.

(CUE PIC OF GLOWING HEART)

I've finally reached a point where I can say this. Deep within myself, I truly am content with the person I am, my own. This past summer was a strong period of self reflection for me. I was able to reflect upon the person I had become and the people I surround myself with. I would push myself to sit in complete silence and reflect on the human being I am. I feel as though I exude unique rays of life. I know I won't take the time I have for granted. I live my life based on the decisions I make for myself.

(CUE LAST IMAGE OF ART PIECE)

I realized I am the only person I can truly rely on. Friends may feel that they may last forever but that's never a guarantee. Parents won't be here forever. Siblings won't be here forever. No one will be there for me forever. Except for me.

I know I can always rely on myself for anything. I am now comfortable and strong just within myself. I was changed without even knowing. I now know what

priorities I must follow. I know I have the strong will and determination to accomplish anything I choose to do.

