Three Valuable Beliefs

Marilyn Monroe once said, "I believe that everything happens for a reason. People change so that you can learn to let go, things go wrong so that you appreciate them when they're right… and sometimes good things fall apart so better things can fall together". In the past year, I have never believed something to be so true. When I graduated from Orchard Park High School in June 2013, I thought I knew exactly who I was and where my life was headed. In a matter of months, I was faced with new experiences and changes I never saw coming. However, by the end of the year, I was able to form three beliefs that I now live by and would like to share.

Transitioning into college at Brockport was not easy; so much change in a short amount of time was overwhelming. Many of my old relationships from high school grew weaker as I began following my own path. I was living away from my family for the first time, trying to break free into the world of independence which was terrifying. Change was unavoidable and I had a hard time accepting the fact that I could not control where the dice landed. I began to wonder if I really knew who I was and struggled to find answers. However, I held tight to the belief that everything happens for a reason. I had faith that my valleys would turn into peaks. Over time, I kept my positive outlook and let my beliefs be my driving force. As it turned out, I experienced some of the most valuable opportunities and happiest moments of my life during my freshman year. Now, I can confidently say the changes I experienced during my first year of college made me stronger, more independent, and ultimately helped me find myself.

Over the course of my year, I gathered three major beliefs that have helped me on the road to finding myself. First, I believe that things are not always black and white, and that this can lead to amazing outcomes. Gray areas spark imagination and innovation. Creativity would have no value if color couldn't flow outside of the lines. You only have one shot at life, so jump

out of the box and create your own world. Second, I believe faith can be the strongest force even though it cannot be seen. When things take a turn for the worse, it's important to have faith that better things will fall into place and lead to a road full of positivity. Faith and hope will never fail because they come from within; you just have to be willing to believe. Lastly and most importantly, I believe that rather than trying to control life, it's beneficial to let go and embrace everything life has to offer, both good and bad. It might be difficult and you may face challenges that seem impossible, but it will be worth it. Don't avoid difficulty, take in your struggles or mistakes and learn from them. Let obstacles make you stronger. When you come across happiness, cherish those moments because they are worth the world and can be remembered for a lifetime. Don't let life pass you by, make the most of everything. Moments and experiences shape who we are, be open to them. At the end of the day, believe that everything happens for a reason.

Before my freshman year, I thought I had life figured out. But the truth is… that's impossible. I learned that life is not black and white, faith is a best friend, and all experiences have meaning. Finding who you are does not happen overnight. The best advice I have is simple, but valuable. The key to finding yourself is to not look, but rather to take in experiences, embrace change, and live in the moment. Through exploring both the valleys and the peaks of life, you'll eventually find the person you were meant to become.