Ryan’s Question: Has college changed the way you look at your future? If so, in what ways?

Amberly’s Answer: -cue nervous laughter-

Oh boy.

The short answer is this: yes.

The long answer, though, is this:

When I first came to UMass, I had a pretty strong sense of self. I knew who I, Amberly Lerner, was, and I knew exactly who I was going to be in life. I was an English major and I was going to go into creative writing. And then while I was at it, I was going to become a lawyer. Not just any lawyer, though! A lawyer that fought for social justice; a miniature, more Asian, Bryan Stevenson. I was going to fight for people’s rights and I was going to give a voice to the voiceless and, who knows, maybe I’d be a writer too.

I’m now an English and communication major, and my plan is significantly less bold and even less concrete. I haven’t completely ruled out being a lawyer. Who knows? One day I might end up going to law school and getting a JD. But over the past two years, I’ve learned that television and media at large are valid things to study and care about. More so, though, with the help of some amazing friends, I've learned that I shouldn’t dismiss the things I love because I believe other people will dismiss them for me first. That people and the world can really, truly surprise you, and sometimes that's bad, but sometimes that's good too.
So, yes, I look at the future a bit differently now. What used to be a concrete set of stairs is now a fluid, ever-changing slide. It’s not clear what stops it will take me to, or the final destination, but I’m trying to work on letting that excite me rather than scare or sadden me. It’s hard not to when relatives and peers and colleagues and everyone else under the sun asks me what I’m going to do once I’ve graduated (even when there’s still two years left to go, but less I digress). Not all of them (probably) think that I actually have to have it all planned out, but there’s an expectation hanging in the air, and sometimes I just have to sit and remind myself to breathe.

I will figure it out. I think. I hope. And in the meantime, I will learn one of the biggest tricks of adulting: allowing myself to be okay with that.

Blog Column:
Amberly's Answers

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