Significant Events Timeline

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March 2008: Losing Friends

 In typical middle school fashion, my close friends and I had an enormous bout of drama in sixth grade. Somehow, I had offended one of them and she had convinced three others to turn against me. In the course of just a few days, girls who I had been best friends with for my entire life would no longer talk to me, sit by me, look at me, or even acknowledge I existed. I was heartbroken. I didn’t know what I had done and no attempts to fix it worked. After some time I decided to just let it go and leave the ball in their court. This bled over into the next school year, but eventually everyone decided the drama was ridiculous and we all became friends again. As we get older and good memories push that event further and further away, details get blurry, but I always remember the heartbreak. This experience made middle school a very difficult time for me, but it did make me closer with several other friends I had. It also brought me much closer with my mom who was a total rock during this time for me. I still trust those four girls, so it’s not like it ruined my conception of them. I learned that you can’t put all of your faith in other people, because at some point (whether it’s in a big way like this or in a much smaller one) they will disappoint you. I learned that other people do not dictate your own worth as a person. Sometimes you have to depend on yourself, and you have to move on even when there is no closure. It also reinforced the idea of having a variety of people as your support system, so if one pillar gives out you have others.

April 2011: Realizing I was a feminist

 While watching Titanic and texting my (then) boyfriend, I made some comment about how absurd Cal was, expecting Rose to obey his wishes, and how women in that movie pointed out multiple times what difficult positions they were in. My boyfriend then told me how I had a point, but he did believe that a woman’s place was in the home, especially when there were children. This set something off in me, and I let him know it. I found it (and still find it) absurd that a man thinks a woman’s place is in the home, or that she is the one that has to be the primary caretaker of the kids. This experience made me realize that I am a feminist and made me unafraid to speak my opinion. Through this one conversation I realized a lot about myself and what I believe in. Since then, my belief in feminism has only gotten stronger and more educated. It is still a topic I’m willing to fight, or educate, anyone on, and I’ve never felt ashamed of my belief in it.

August 2011: Learning to Run

 It was the early fall of sophomore year, the first meet of the cross country season. I’d run cross country and track the prior year but as more of a social event; I had quit soccer in middle school because it was “too much running”, so the fact that I was suddenly running distance was a shock. By the time my second cross country season rolled around, I found myself able to keep up with our top girl runner, one of my close friends. At the first meet, I decided to see if I could pace with her for the duration of the race. I scared myself with how much I wanted it, but I was able to finish about 20-30 seconds behind her, and I had taken 80 seconds off of my best time from the prior season. I had parents, teammates, and even my coach come up to me and ask “Where did that come from? When did you get good?!” I loved the feeling of surprising everyone, and I loved that I was able to push my body that far. It made me realize that if you’re willing to work hard enough for something and you truly want it, it can happen. And that sometimes it’s good to scare yourself. This made me realize what I was truly capable of, and I went on to be the top girl runner on our team for two years and constantly want to push my limits. It’s an addictive, amazing feeling.

November 2012: Haiti.

 In the winter of my junior year I felt the call to go to Haiti with my church and was fortunate enough to be able to follow through on it. The mission trip was set to be one week, and with the exception of one girl I didn’t know anyone on the trip. One of the girls was my age but other than that the team mainly consisted of middle-aged people. The objective was to evangelize and to also build a home for one of the families who had lost theirs in the 2010 earthquake. This experience is extremely significant in my life for so many reasons. First, it was the first time I had been to a foreign country (excluding Canada), I was without my parents, I was the minority, there was a language barrier, and I didn’t know the people I was with. The first night I was extremely homesick and started crying when I talked to my parents on the phone. The second day I was still uneasy, but I never doubted that I was meant to be in Haiti…I just wasn’t totally sure why. By the morning of the third day, I was completely in love with the people, the country, and the mission we were on. It shaped me in a lot of minuscule ways, but there were a few prominent ones. First, I saw people who were so happy even though they had next to nothing in term of material possessions. Many of them didn’t even a solid education, and when I returned to school and had loads of makeup work, I reminded myself to be grateful that I had the opportunity to receive an education. I learned to trust God’s plan for me, and to be willing to follow Him into the unknown. I second guess myself a lot, but I was absolutely positive that I was meant to go to Haiti. I learned a better appreciation of what I have, and that it’s possible to help and connect with others even if there’s a language or culture barrier.

May 2013: Show Choir Auditions

 I had auditioned three times for a spot as singer/dancer in the high school show choir prior to this, and the May 2013 audition was my last chance to fulfill a childhood dream. I was a member of the Essentials (the instrumental portion) my freshman year and I was an alternate for two years in a row, meaning I filled in for girls who couldn’t make it. I got quite a bit of stage time, but it wasn’t the same as being a full-fledged member. But finally, finally at the end of my junior year I found out I had made singer-dancer. Officially. I was ecstatic. After so many “failed” attempts, many people told me that they wouldn’t blame me if I just decided not to audition again, that it was understandable. But I decided to keep pursuing it. It was difficult, getting told “no” after I repeatedly felt like I had proved myself. It was always worth it, though; I loved performing, whether I was in my own spot or filling in for someone else. This experience, although it was truly ongoing for four years, taught me perseverance. It taught me that sometimes you have to go AGAINST what other people tell you is acceptable, or even easy, to get what you truly want. It also taught me that the fight will be worth it in the end.

October 2013: Abby moving

 I grew up on a dead end road with two other houses, one of which were teachers at my school, and the other was a couple around my parents’ age, with kids our ages. Abby’s been my best friend for as long as I can remember; I don’t even remember meeting her. That entire family was always a constant in my life. Whenever I needed to get away from my own parents, or needed to talk, or just wanted to hang out I could take the two minute walk down the street and instantly feel better about my life.

 At the beginning of senior year, Abby told me that they were moving. It wasn’t far, in the grand scheme of things; only about a 15 minute drive from my house, into a development. She’d still be going to the same school and still close enough to see on short notice. Still, it was like everything had changed. In October the house at the end of the street held a bunch of labeled boxes, and soon thereafter a new, younger family moved in. I was resentful at first; I knew that the Shrolls had wanted to move to a different house for a long time, I just didn’t expect it to happen when so many other things in my life were changing, too. With her moving, my habits changed, such as the way I spent my free time, how much I saw her and her family, and how much time I spent with my own parents. It was definitely a hard transition, and honestly it’s still weird that I can’t say we are neighbors. But the experience taught me that a friendship born out of convenience became a lot more meaningful than that, and even though I didn’t see her as much as I once did, our relationship didn’t suffer. It gave me more faith in our friendship, and in the thought that some best friends really are for life.