

Written at 18: A Statement of Where I am and why I Write

I have a problem. My head is spinning. I'm not being authentic. I know how I want to present myself, but when I step out the door, the opposite occurs. I annoy myself, and I don't know what to do. That's so annoying, saying "I don't know what to do." I say it all the time to everybody, and I sound like a baby.

It feels immature to be a person who wants to be guided. I want to have a schedule made for me and tasks I'm given to complete. I want to be told when to rest, sleep, and get up in the morning. To work, stop work, work out, send an email, or go to an event. I want to be held accountable. I want to reach somebody's standard. I want to go to bed feeling full, knowing I fulfilled a greater purpose, something solid I can hold in my hand and kiss goodnight.

I have so much freedom in this life. I am beyond privileged and a bit entitled, and it all amounts to the statement of my late teenage years, and soon, my early adult years: *I don't know what to do.*

And so I do know what to do. A singular kernel pops in my brain, and I call my mom. I'm anxious as I wait for her to pick up. "Hello?" she says, "Hi!" I say, "Hello?" she says again. I morph into a baby. I tell her everything that's happened for the past two weeks, how I feel about it, what I'm doing next week, how I feel about that, which new people I talked to, how I feel about them, what the weather's been like, how I feel about that and it's only when the minute had circles once around the clock, that I ask about her. "So what have you been up to?". I am a terrible baby.

After our call, I discipline myself. I set some things straight. I pick myself up off the ground and place her upright in front of her journal. She writes how she feels, I analyze it. I write her some intentions for her day, she nods in agreement. I write her a to-do list, she turns and begins to work. I pat her on the head. *Good baby.*

Every Christmas for the past ten years, I have made my parents gifts. I've knitted scarves, painted ornaments, and baked cookies. This year, I walked along Queen Street West and dipped into shops along the Roncesvalles strip. I perused cashmere shawls and artisanal jams and spreads.

I don't know what this all means. All I know is that it's meaningful.

I use writing to place myself in time and understand where I might be headed. I use it to self-reflect, organize my thoughts and plan for the future. I guide myself through life with my writing. Day after day, as my journal draws nearer to capacity, I begin to let go of a feeling I've had for a long time. I no longer want someone to guide me. I no longer yearn for an external force to assign my life's purpose. I'm still growing up, but at least it's happening, and it's a horrendously beautiful thing.