Purpose Out of Chaos

From a young age, I have been let down by adults. As long as I have been alive my parents have never been together or had a normal relationship. I grew up being asked the question, what's your family like? Not many elementary school kids understood my answer when I responded with “very complicated”. Living in two different environments made me deal with numerous events that the average child couldn’t even imagine going through. My parents have been in multiple relationships that haven't been good for me. At the age of four, I was abused by my mom’s fiancé for months without anyone knowing.

At twelve, my dad had one girlfriend who was a significant part of my life; she was not only dating my dad for a couple years but was also my mom’s friend from high school. After their breakup, she ended up committing suicide the day before my dad’s birthday the following year. She was always someone I had admired for her sense of style, nobility, and charisma, and losing her was devastating. Unlike my dad’s other girlfriends who I only bonded with superficially, losing her was like losing a mother. She had always been there for me even when she and my dad weren't together. She was my inspiration for pursuing a career in environmental science and restoration. She encouraged my love for the outdoors, taking me on hikes and collecting rocks and moss to build terrariums.

I have been consistently working since the age of 12, and before that I would find odd jobs with family and friends to provide for myself. Although many people at the time thought my money I was earning was for toys and other childhood items, the majority was going towards daily necessities. Following my father’s divorce, he was always out drinking leaving me alone for hours on end, and when he was home, he frequently had severe mood swings. I taught myself to cook and would do the grocery shopping for my dad. I also avoided my dad at all costs. I played hockey, started wrestling and spent as much time with friends as possible.

I have never let any of the things that have happened to me define who I was in that moment or who I strived to be. I have always kept my head up and been relatively independent, since the adults in my life never brought me any consistency or security. I have always pushed myself to get good grades and been highly motivated.

Overall my childhood was extremely chaotic, but it has made me face many obstacles that have shaped me into the person I am today. My trauma motivated me to do everything in my power to be successful. Through my independence and lack of reliance on others, I have done things for myself that nobody else could've, which has provided me with a mentality that nobody can dismantle. I plan to bring these lessons I have learned from the challenges I have faced into my college years, and I know they will help me prosper in the College of Forestry at Oregon State University.