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Shannon Scheel

NEW YEAR...SAME ME: INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE SELF

February 14, 2017

College is over: I have officially been an 'adult' for six months. While the term 'adult' - also used in the verb form 'adulthood' - has many different meanings, often constructed by the individual use in various contexts, I'm choosing the definition of post-grad, supporting myself, and living on my own in a new city. I'm contributing to corporate America through a salaried sales and consulting position at a tech company; my roommate and I live in Santa Monica; I pay all my own bills; and I just bought a 2013 Honda Civic. Happy New Year everyone...nothing screams 'adulthood' like making car payments!


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In my head, this lifestyle is what I wanted after college. Although I'm not exactly sure where my career path will lead me, I've had a consistent vision of working towards something. Although that 'something' currently remains ambiguous, by exposing myself to new career opportunities and places to live, expanding my horizons with a variety of groups of people, and, most importantly, declaring myself independent, I knew I would be putting myself in the best position possible to take on whatever the world threw at me. At this point, six months in, I can say that I've been achieving that goal so far.

Well... almost. I'm going to have to let you in on a little secret—brace yourselves ladies...here's the thing: no matter how much you prepare, no matter which city you end up in, no matter how much your job pays, no matter how many people you know, and no matter if your parents pay your rent or not, NOTHING will prepare you for your first six months (or a year or two, even) of adulthood kicking you in the ass. Because it does. Repeatedly. You walk into work, expecting to

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start your daily routine, and hit the ground running, and then hiccups happen repeatedly. You forget the date of your important doctor's appointment and miss it entirely. Your landlord claims to have never received your rent check, to which you immediately think, 'Are any of my other bills delayed? Is this going to affect my credit score?' At which point you begin to question if you're even at all deserving of the responsibility of the car you just purchased.

I came home exhausted after work today. After a tumultuous, though formative, 2016, I was looking to 2017 with promise, yet everything I did today seemed to slap me in the face. Did I even want to go to work tomorrow? Is this what I'm meant to be doing?

As I slowly pick myself out of my crumpled hole of despair (with a dramatic, albeit sometimes necessary emotional release in the privacy of my own home...sincere apologies to the receptionist at the urology office who saw my crying live. I guess they mean what they say with the phrase, 'There's nothing like a good cry.') I'm reminded: WE ARE NOT ALONE. Why is there the expectation that the start of a New Year is like an automatic switch that turns you into someone who automatically has 'figured it all out' and can do no wrong? Who said that a resolution HAS to fix a problem? Do they have all the answers?

I THINK OF GREAT WOMEN WHO CAME BEFORE ME, WHAT THEY KNEW AT MY AGE, AND HOW THEY BUILT UPON THEIR PAST SELF AS OPPOSED TO ERASING IT.

I've never made a formal New Year's Resolution, and I think if anything, these past six months have solidified why. As I move into a new phase of life, I try to gain perspective through learning and building on my previous experiences and interests. In this way, self-improvement becomes a natural, gradual process of constant discovery, evaluation, and exposure. I think of great women who have come before me, what they knew at my age, and how they worked to learn and grow by building upon their past self as opposed to erasing it.

Secondly, a resolution implies that there is a problem that needs resolving. And while I learn to balance supporting myself, pursuing an 8-5 career that I'm still unsure of, and managing my finances, these experiences are all pieces of the puzzle. While I've made my fair share of mistakes since setting out on my own, the beauty of a mistake is you can only really make it once, and then you learn from it.

Moving into 2017, I want to carry this mentality with me as I continue to work hard towards my passions and interests, and I encourage you to do the same. 'New Year, New Me' is not the answer; rather, building upon the parts of yourself that are worth investing in, is.

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Meagan Hooper (/connect/74-meagan-hooper.html) · about 1 week ago

So true and so good Shannon!

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