

Chapel Talk

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For what I'm about to tell you to make sense I should probably preface it with the fact that I have never liked change, and the thought of losing the memory of moments where I am truly happy is something that scares me a lot. So much so that in fleeting moments where I feel truly at peace and content, I would find myself already saying "I hope I never forget the way I feel right now", or "I hope I never forget the people that made me feel this way". Because of this, I oftentimes find myself thinking about how long things will last and how I can find ways to keep my memories alive. And although I definitely did not understand this fresh out of middle school, I'm sure it was my subconscious talking when I decided to do the following:

Before I left home for my freshman year, I made a choice to decorate a bright yellow shoebox with the intention to fill it with all of the memories that the next year of my life would bring. The catch was, I would do it every year & that I wouldn't open any of them until the end of my senior year. But, in an attempt to find some inspiration for this talk I decided to open the time capsules that sat at the top of my closet a little earlier than expected.

Originally, I just thought that having this shoebox would be a fun way to see how I had grown in four years, where I had started, and what I had become. But as I sifted through the four boxes I began to recognize that during my time at St. Andrew's there had been a shift in what I thought was important enough to put in these shoeboxes.

I hate to say it, but my freshman year shoebox is basic. It's full to the brim of things like my bandana from the square dance, my happy list from a dorm function, and the hospital bracelet from when I got my first concussion at Topher's house. Although important, these items were my attempt to give my future self a snapshot of the cookie-cutter freshman life I was living. These things did remind me of funny memories that had happened and who my 14-year-old self was, but sitting on the floor of my childhood bedroom I was mad at my former self for not throwing in reminders of the random, spur of the moment memories that I now worry I have forgotten.

Contrarily, my shoebox from senior year -although considerably lighter than the rest- is full of random things. Along with the classic ticket to the states game and the crumpled copy of carols from the carol shout, there are a large number of small tattered notes like the one written from Bobbi imploring that I saved her life after letting her borrow my scissors, the cute drawing from my roommate's sister, and the movie ticket from the cruddy Christmas movie that Nicole,

Emilia and I saw on a random weekend at Westtown. Seeing these scraps of my senior year, brought me back to so many moments of accidental fun that could've never been planned or expected, but so accurately illustrate the true reality of my school year.

Sitting on my floor with the remnants of four years of my life next to me I realized that the moments that were are small, random, fleeting are the ones that have turned into my favorites. While Proms, Semi's, and Frosty Runs will always be fun, I have come to a new appreciation for smaller moments during my time at St. Andrew's because they are what made my experience at school so personal and genuine. Initially, I thought that high school memories were primarily going to made up of the big, planned, expected events, but I was wrong. Every day that you wake up on the St. Andrew's campus there is an immense amount of opportunity to make long-lasting, genuine, memories with the incredible people around you, and at times I took that for granted. The decision to walk the crew docks, go on the chipotle trip, or rearrange arrange your room with your roommates might leave you with an incomplete essay, but in return, you are gaining a deeper connection to the extraordinary people around you, and in my experience, it's worth it.

If I can offer you all any advice from what I've learned, it is to be open to any opportunity to have fun, small and large, easy or hard. Put effort into strengthening your friendships and carve your own path, go on adventures, get to check-in at 7:50 on the dot, and don't waste the time that you have because those "the little things", I have come to find, make the biggest difference in how we remember a person, place, or adventure. If you are worried that you may forget the small moments like I was, make a shoebox, keep the ticket, stick the note in the top drawer of your desk, or write it down, but do not let the fear of losing a memory stop you from making another one.