

Growing up I never really liked school. When I was younger, elementary school to middle school age, I really didn't connect with any subjects or topics and everyone around me seemed to feel the opposite. All my friends really wanted to be a firefighter or a doctor or an astronaut and I just didn't want to strive for anything at all. I switched schools a few times and switched from homeschooling to regular school. Multiple different times. I had a pretty confusing relationship with education, and what it meant to me.

Fast forward to highschool, I started to panic, realizing that I didn't have many goals or aspirations, and I wasn't looking forward to my future. I had an older brother who was in college at the time and was entering the Air Force, and my parents had really tried to stick this career to me as well, since I hadn't shown interest in much else. I grasped onto it because it gave me some kind of purpose or motivation. Fast-forward to going into my junior year, I realized that I didn't want that path that I had thought I had wanted for the last three years, and that it was ok to not know what your purposes in life are or what you want to contribute to the world, especially at such a young age.

During my junior year of high school, I had taken a psychology class which had really interested me and finally gave me something to look forward to intellectually. When applying to colleges, I kept this in mind, and when coming up with ideas for a future major or career path. I'm still not fully on my exact intended career path but, at least I had finally found something that really stuck with me and I really enjoyed and felt passionate about. Here I am now in college, still figuring out what education means to me and how I want to further my education, but it's made me grow in this confusing process and learn more about myself intellectually. Being at Mary Washington around like-minded people who are interested in the same subjects and classes as me, has really helped me grow as well and feel comfortable in myself. This

semester I made a new friend, Renzo, who really surprised me with his compassion and empathy for his family and his career. We both want to study biomedical science, and minor in neuroscience. He also loves his psychology classes just like me! Starting out in school I definitely had humble beginnings, and I didn't make any connections, nor feel connected to myself intellectually. Going to college and being around people who share similar interests as you and getting the freedom to express yourself and figure yourself out intellectually is really rewarding and I've been loving growing each day.