

## **Diana**

Sitting in a Nissan Sentra in the parking lot of Raritan Valley Community College, Diana was bundled up, watching YouTube videos in between her classes. The cold New Jersey weather wrapped her car in a frost-like, protective shell from reality while old wounds resurfaced in new places. It was so cold all she could see was her breath. The stability of the warm, comforting blanket that swaddled her was nothing like how Diana felt on the inside. Her overwhelming anxiety consumed her. She realized the world around her was turning gray. The barren trees and dead grass slowly turned more lifeless each day she arrived at her school. “The community college wasn’t actually gray but it felt that way,” Diana said. The crippling anxiety inside her caused her to sit in her car between classes as a safe space, but it no longer felt safe; it started to feel uncomfortable. Her discomfort became intolerable which led to deeper reflection. At 22, she realized that she needed to take school more seriously to obtain the life she desired. Despite having an unfortunate distaste towards school and negative external factors, Diana worked hard and transferred to a prestigious school.

Diana's earliest memory of school was in first grade, where she had an unfriendly teacher who was not supportive of her growth; this lit the spark of her hatred towards school. In high school, Diana was relentlessly bullied and mistreated. “She knew a terrible and personal family secret of mine, so I lived every day afraid she would tell everyone about it in an attempt to make me feel worse about myself,” said Diana. The consuming dread was one of the significant reasons that contributed to Diana’s depression and anxiety, hindering her ability to function.

The persistent bullying Diana faced translated into her academics. She had a 2.3 GPA and never did her assignments out of school hours. When asked about her high school GPA and the contributing factors towards it, Diana’s demeanor changed, and she expressed her answer

through a melancholic tone. She said, “I was super depressed and hated school.” The reflection of how she felt on the inside became visible through her assignments. Furthermore, she thought she was never going to graduate high school. If she did not pass her math class, which she had already failed once, she would not have enough credits to graduate high school. Fortunately, Diana graduated from high school and decided to attend community college.

After her first semester at community college, she received her grades and did “a pretty bad job.” When she saw her grades, it evoked unfortunate memories of high school. Diana knew she had the potential to do better in school and also in life. The motivation of her paying for school with her own money made her realize she could not afford to lose out financially by not giving it her all. Even more so, after a deep evaluation of her life, she set her mind to transferring to a residential, four-year institution to create more opportunities for herself.

During the transfer application process, Diana considered applying to schools she deemed as a “reach.” After all the hard work to improve her mindset and GPA she earned a 3.7 GPA at her community college. Even with her drastic improvement, she had doubts that stemmed from the pressure of college applications and the past of her low high school GPA, the low first semester GPA at community college, and her lack of participation in activities. “Getting accepted to BU was in great contrast to her former high school self, one that was struggling to get by. This was her reach school, and she was skeptical if she would be able to get in. So skeptical in fact that she registered at an NJ state school first” said Ryan Seals, Diana’s long-term boyfriend. After learning the news of her acceptance, she knew she had to take this opportunity even though it was a tough decision for her to leave home.

Diana changed her life, even though all bets seemed to be against her. She became a hardworking student and developed a positive drive for her bright future. Diana sets an example

for other students struggling by showing it is never too late to change circumstances, and that if you work hard to achieve, it does not matter when it happens. Diana became a junior at BU at the age of 24, which contradicts the societal pressures that communicate that college is for people between the ages of 18 and 22 years old.

High school is commonly seen as the groundwork for one's future. Teachers, faculty, and parents typically emphasize the importance of doing well educationally in high school to get into a good college. Students who struggle academically are stereotyped as inadequate. In Diana's case and many other students' realities, those expectations were not met. Diana met them later on in her academic career and proved that it does not matter how old you are or when you start; you can work hard to achieve your goals at any time. Diana is proud of her hard work and acceptance even though applying to BU was heavily contemplated.

Diana no longer sits in her car between classes. She does her schoolwork or hangs out with peers. She has grown out of the need to protect herself and now fully immerses herself into every activity, creating a greater inner strength and drive to achieve the future she aspires to. Diana loves school now and has said, "If I hadn't chosen BU, I was afraid I would've wondered for the rest of my life who I could've been if I did choose BU."

EVM - Profile - Writing Sample

Source List:

Diana, a junior transfer student at Boston University

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Ryan, Diana's boyfriend

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