

## Tough Transition

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Having issues concerning mental health can be triggered by nearly anything. A problem that is perceived as insignificant and ephemeral can end up causing anxiety and depression, especially at prestigious prep schools where students are constantly under pressure. It is expected that students coming from day schools will have difficult transitions to boarding school, but these issues are amplified during winter term when the heaps of major commitments pile up and social issues get tangled up. My friend and I decided to share how arriving at Groton has affected us.

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Me:

I remember when I first came here, I was so excited. I was ready to make a bunch of new friends and be “cool.” My classmates easily found their groups of people they could hang out with all the time, but it wasn’t so easy for me. I realized that I wasn’t as social as I thought and ended up chickening out from a bunch of social gatherings.

There were these “cool girls” and “cliques” in our form, and they dominated everything. I am friends with them, especially with the ones in my dorm. These girls are nice individually, but together, difficult to approach. They often makes me uncomfortable.

I remember crying to my mom on the phone because I felt that I couldn’t fit in. I hated that these girls made me uncomfortable in way I couldn’t really explain. I wished that we could all hang out together, not just in strict friend groups. I felt down all the time because what I imagined of myself here was completely different from reality.

I began feeling anxious all the time. Not about social issues this time—though I’m sure that contributed—but about my grades. Grades meant everything to me, yet I was too wrapped up in my anxiety to completely focus. I knew that, if I started earlier on my major assignments, then I wouldn’t have to cram the previous night. I knew that I could do many things to make myself feel less anxious all the time, but I didn’t do them. I basking in this anxiety for hours, even if I have a big test the next day. Yet I still survived. Memorization comes naturally, so watching television all through study hall and then skipping breakfast the next day would do for a Latin test. I guess I haven’t found a *healthy* balance to manage my anxiety.

It has been so warm lately, and that really improved my mood. Things don’t bother me as much as they should anymore. I face everything with more positivity, probably because I am too excited to be home to care. I guess things are better, but what will I do the next winter term? Things will get better, you say? I know.

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Friend:

Things were perfectly normal when I arrived to The Circle; I remember those moments vividly. I smiled and socialized like I had always done. But as the weeks passed, I found that I could barely recognize myself. The social and outgoing person that I was back home was suddenly nowhere to be found. In the blink of an eye, I became introverted in a way that I had never experienced before.

The people around me were a major contributing factor. I had been my usual happy self until things started going downhill. Unspeakable things were said behind my back—things that I was unaware that anybody would ever say about another person. I was excluded and treated as if I were insignificant. I hadn't done anything to anybody, nor had I ever experienced something like this in my life. I convinced myself that I was the problem—I needed to change somehow. I became self-conscious about everything and anything I did or said. This eventually drove me to a dark place that I had no idea how to escape. Eventually, I just stopped trying. I felt as though I didn't belong, and I even contemplated leaving Groton. Although things are getting better now, I still find that it is difficult to be myself. I am constantly worried about being judged or made fun of. It's difficult transitioning from a place where you're comfortable to a place where you're struggling to be understood.

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Spring break is near, and we both feel so much better, proud for getting through this challenging term. Spring term is filled with much hope and warmth, so we both can't wait. We have learned to relax and care less about the things that bring us down.

“And if all you can do right now is breathe, that's ok. You're doing your best, so to hell with the rest.”

*You're too tense, you're always worrying about the past present and future, caring about everyone and everything.*

*You're too tense, life is in front of you, walk through it with love and appreciation.*

*Don't get wrapped up in the things that depress you, or worry about everything.*

*Just feel good and be happy.*

*You are your own kind of special, don't keep comparing yourself with other people.*

*Don't be so self-conscious and unconfident.*

*There is nothing wrong with you, to hell with what they think.*

*Just let it all go.*

*Be free, be yourself, be happy.*

*Don't worry about all the “demons” in your head, or someone you are jealous of.*

*Because you are your own individual you, and when all hell has frozen over; your warm heart will be all you need.*

This quote and poem helped us push through our difficult times. Once in awhile, we all need to take deep breaths and live for nothing but ourselves.