

JUST BE YOU

ANUSHRIYA PRADHAN



BlueRose **ONE**.com
Stories Matter

New Delhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

India | U.K.

Copyright © Anushriya Pradhan 2026

All rights reserved by author. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the publisher assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within.

BlueRose Publishers takes no responsibility for any damages, losses, or liabilities that may arise from the use or misuse of the information, products, or services provided in this publication.



BlueRoseONE.com
S t o r i e s M a t t e r
New Delhi • London

For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

www.BlueRoseONE.com

info@blurosepublishers.com

+91 8882 898 898

+4407342408967

ISBN: 978-81-69822-15-2

Cover Design: Sharvi Singh

Typesetting: Sagar

First Edition: June 2026

Acknowledgement

This book would have not been possible without the people who became a part of my journey, directly or indirectly.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents for their constant support, sacrifices and belief in me. Their guidance has helped shape the person I am today.

I am deeply grateful to my teachers, mentors and hostel guardians who guided me through different phases of my life. Their lessons extended far beyond classrooms and helped me grow with confidence, discipline and resilience.

To my friends, thank you for the memories, laughter, support and life lessons. Some of you stayed and some became memories but each of you contributed to my journey in your own way.

I would also like to thank everyone who encouraged me to write, reflect and share my experiences. Your words of support gave me the courage to put my thoughts onto these pages.

Most importantly, I want to thank my younger self, the version of me who kept going through confusions, mistakes, heartbreaks, growth and self discovery. Without those experiences this book would never have existed.

Finally, to every reader holding this book, thank you for giving my words a place in your time and heart. I hope these pages remind you that growth is never linear, healing takes time and above all the most important person you can become is yourself.

With gratitude,

Anushriya Pradhan

Contents

Chapter One: The Beginning of Becoming Me.....	1
Chapter Two: The Right to Be Yourself.....	8
Chapter Three: Love Yourself Without Conditions.....	10
Chapter Four: #LIFE.....	18
Chapter Five: She Becomes.....	27
Chapter Six: The Version of Me That I Almost Forgot.....	37
Chapter Seven: A Home I Didn't Choose But Learned To Love..	49
Chapter Eight: Being One, Becoming Enough.....	57
Chapter Nine: Friendship In All Its Forms.....	62
Chapter Ten: The Climb Isn't Easy.....	70
Chapter Eleven: Where Feelings Had No Name.....	79
Chapter Twelve: In Every Phase, I Lost And Found Myself.....	88
Chapter Thirteen: The Art of Being There for Yourself.....	96

Chapter One

The Beginning of Becoming Me



Crossing the hurdles of 15 years was just so remarkable. I know i'm just a 15- yo tryna share my thoughts with you but i mean it ..

Well indeed i,ve been stuck on my past, present and future. The past was too miserable, the present is full of suspense and the future I really have no idea what it holds for me ... You know the word **people** ... umm it's us. People tell us many things, some good as well as some bad. Good things are meant to be told because we're worth the one but the bad things must not be given attention to. It prolly won't affect the one who is saying us but for sure will affect us at the end because you're prioritizing the thoughts of theirs, which will eventually lead to a massive erosion of our own judgement and self-worth.

Talking behind our back, this is the commonest thing we usually get a glimpse of nowadays and surprisingly most of the time,it's our

own people. The ones who smile in front of us often carry a different version of us in conversations we're not a part of. And somewhere along the way, we start questioning ourselves based on words we never even heard directly. But the truth is, their whispers say more about them than they ever will about us. Not every opinion deserves a place in our mind, and not every judgment deserves our reaction. If we keep holding onto these unseen conversations, we slowly lose sight of who we really are— trying to fix a version of ourselves that only exists in someone else's narrative. And somewhere between growing up and growing distant from the version of ourselves we once were, we start realizing that life is not as simple as it looked when we were younger. The very same people who once told us, **"You are still a child,"** suddenly expect us to understand the world overnight. One day, they laugh at our childishness, and the next day, they question our maturity. But how is that even possible? How can someone suddenly know how life works when they are still trying to understand themselves?

Teenage years are confusing. Very confusing. And I am not just saying this casually. I have also mentioned this in other chapters of my book because this phase genuinely changes a person in ways words cannot fully explain. It is the phase where emotions become deeper, thoughts become heavier, and silence becomes louder than before. It is the phase where you slowly stop seeing the world through innocent eyes and start noticing things you wish you never noticed at all.

We live in a generation where people always have something to say about us. Always. No matter what we do, someone somewhere will have an opinion ready. If you are too quiet, they call you rude. If you talk too much, they call you annoying. If you are emotional, you are "too sensitive." If you stay silent, you are "too cold." It almost feels like this world has already prepared judgments before even understanding us.

And honestly, one of the saddest things about this generation is how normal judging people has become.

People judge your clothing.

People judge your body.

People judge your hairstyle.

People judge your skin.

People judge your personality.

People even judge your happiness sometimes.

If you are too thin, people ask if you even eat properly. Some even go to the extent of making horrible assumptions, joking about illnesses or substances without realizing how deeply their words can hurt someone. And if you gain weight, suddenly everyone becomes a fitness expert. They tell you to exercise more, eat less, change yourself and become better. As if your body was created for their approval.

And if you wear makeup, people say you are hiding your real self. They say you are insecure, that you are trying too hard to look beautiful. But if you do not wear makeup, they call you too plain, too simple, too “basic.” It is almost funny how society creates standards and then criticizes people for trying to fit into them.

Even hair becomes a topic of judgment. Especially in many parts of our Indian culture, girls are still expected to keep long hair because people believe that is what femininity looks like. But honestly, I never understood why a girl’s worth should depend on the length of her hair. If someone wants short hair, let her keep it short. If someone wants long hair, let her grow it. Why should personal choices become public discussions?

And clothing? That becomes another battlefield.

If someone wears short clothes, people judge them.

If someone wears oversized clothes, they call them tomboyish.

At one point, you genuinely start wondering, “What exactly does society want from us?”

The truth is, if we keep living according to society's opinions, we will never truly live for ourselves. There will always be someone unhappy with the way we exist. And if we spend our entire lives trying to satisfy everyone around us, we will slowly lose ourselves in the process.

That is why I believe one thing very strongly, not every opinion deserves a place in your mind.

People will always talk.

They talked before you existed.

They will talk after you leave too.

So why should their temporary words have permanent control over your peace?

That does not mean becoming disrespectful or arrogant. There is a difference between confidence and rudeness. Sometimes people think strength means shouting louder, replying harshly, or proving everyone wrong aggressively. But personally, I believe the strongest replies are often the calmest ones.

For example, if someone pushes through you angrily, you can reply in anger too. But you can also politely say, "Excuse me, can I have my way?" Both are responses, but one carries peace while the other carries frustration. Manners matter. Respect matters. The way we speak reflects who we are more than who the other person is.

And yes, I know what it feels like to be judged physically too.

When I was younger, I was actually quite thin. But after the lockdown, things changed. I gained weight because of thyroid issues. No matter how much I tried dieting or exercising, losing weight was difficult for me. But people did not know that. They only saw the outside. And because they only saw the outside, they felt entitled to comment on it.

"You have gained so much weight."

"You should exercise more."

“Stop eating junk.”

“You looked better before.”

What people fail to understand is that not everybody changes because of laziness. Sometimes there are health issues behind it. Sometimes there are silent battles behind it. But how do you explain that to every single person? I could not walk around with a label on my forehead saying, ***“Please stop body shaming me, I have thyroid.”***

And honestly, that phase hurt me a lot. Not because I hated myself, but because constant comments slowly make you question yourself even when you are trying your best already.

But over time, I slowly found peace with myself. I realized something important, people who are truly comfortable with themselves do not spend their time insulting others.

And maybe that is why today, whenever I see someone getting body shamed or silently struggling, I naturally feel the urge to support them. Because I know how painful it feels when people casually turn your insecurities into jokes.

Sometimes one kind sentence can heal more than we realize.

So if you are reading this, please remember this carefully, before commenting on someone’s appearance, think twice. Maybe even thrice. Because sometimes a single comment stays in someone’s mind longer than ten compliments ever could.

Another thing our generation struggles with is trying too hard to fit in.

Please do not change yourself just to become acceptable for people who would replace you tomorrow without hesitation. The moment you start changing your personality, your style, your thoughts, or your happiness just to match society’s standards, you slowly stop recognizing yourself.

And trust me, losing yourself is far more painful than being judged by others.

Not everyone around us is truly “**our person**” and this is something many people learn too late.

Especially in today’s generation, we become emotionally attached very quickly. We mistake conversations for connections. We mistake attention for loyalty. We mistake closeness for trust.

But the truth is, there is a huge difference between: acquaintances, classmates, benchmates, streammates, batchmates, neighbors, relatives, colleagues, online friends, and real emotional connections. Not everyone who talks to you every day truly understands you.

And I am saying this from personal experience too. I am an extroverted person. If someone talks to me comfortably for even ten minutes, I naturally start sharing things about my life. Not my deepest secrets, but enough to let them know me. And honestly, sometimes I regret that habit.

Because just because someone shares a few things with you does not mean they value the connection the same way you do.

That is why we should be careful about who we trust with our emotions. Not everyone deserves access to every part of us.

Sometimes people stay only for convenience. Sometimes they stay because they are bored. Sometimes they stay because you are useful during a phase of their life. And when that phase ends, they quietly disappear too.

That does not make you unworthy.

It just means not everyone is meant to stay forever.

And that is okay.

Social media has also changed the way we see ourselves.

We scroll endlessly through perfect pictures, glowing skin, ideal bodies, aesthetic lifestyles, happy friendships, dreamy relationships, and suddenly our own lives start feeling “less.” Even when we know social media is filtered, edited, posed, and curated carefully, we still compare our real lives to someone else’s highlights.

And comparison is dangerous.

Because while you are comparing yourself to someone online, someone else might also be looking at you wishing they had something you already have. Maybe your confidence. Maybe your smile. Maybe your hair. Maybe your height. Maybe your kindness.

It becomes an endless cycle where nobody feels enough because everyone is too busy trying to become someone else.

That is why learning emotional awareness matters so much.

Not every situation should be handled emotionally. Sometimes we need logic too. Sometimes we need boundaries. Sometimes we need to pause before reacting. Emotions are beautiful, but they can also make us vulnerable if we let them control every decision we make.

Growing up is not just about getting older.

It is about understanding yourself little by little.

Understanding what hurts you.

Understanding what heals you.

Understanding who deserves access to you.

Understanding when to walk away.

Understanding when to stay silent.

Understanding that peace is more valuable than proving yourself to people who already decided not to understand you.

And maybe becoming “me” does not mean becoming perfect at all.

Maybe it simply means slowly learning how to exist in a world full of opinions without letting those opinions destroy who I truly am.

*“Maybe none of us are truly lost, we are just shaped by voices
around us until we decide to find our own”*

Chapter Two

The Right to Be Yourself



Every person is unique in their own way. We differ in our appearance, beliefs, personalities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Diversity is not a flaw in society, it is a natural and beautiful part of it. The world would be a dull place if everyone were exactly the same.

Every individual deserves the freedom to live authentically and be true to themselves. Some people identify as male, female, transgender, non-binary, or another gender identity. Others may be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or belong to the LGBTQ+ community. Regardless of how a person identifies, they deserve the same respect, dignity, and opportunities as everyone else.

Unfortunately, society often judges people for being different. This judgment can lead to discrimination, bullying, exclusion, and emotional pain. I am not writing this merely to make a point or gain attention. I have personally witnessed people being mocked, insulted, and treated unfairly simply because they did not fit society's expectations.

I remember seeing people who were transgender being ridiculed and made to feel unwelcome. In India, many people know the transgender community as **kinners**. Some people avoid them, laugh at them, or make hurtful comments without considering the impact of their words. I once witnessed a transgender woman being teased until she broke down in tears. The people mocking her had no reason to do so, yet their actions caused real pain.

Before judging someone, we should try to understand their perspective. Every person has their own journey, struggles, and experiences. Just as we wish to live our lives according to our own choices and identities, others deserve the same freedom. We may not fully understand another person's experiences, but we can still treat them with kindness and respect.

Respect does not require everyone to be the same. People can hold different opinions while still treating one another with dignity. Empathy, understanding, and compassion help build stronger communities and healthier societies.

Every person deserves equal opportunities, safety, and respect. Basic human rights should never depend on a person's gender identity or sexual orientation. Inclusion benefits society as a whole because it allows everyone to contribute their talents, ideas, and strengths without fear of rejection.

A person's worth is determined by their character, not by their gender identity or by whom they love. Being different is not a problem. Judging people for being different is.

The world becomes a better place when people are free to be themselves and when others choose respect over prejudice. Let us stop bullying, stop mocking, and stop treating people as if they do not belong. Instead, let us become helping hands for those who are struggling. A more accepting world begins with simple acts of kindness, understanding, and respect.

Everyone deserves the chance to be themselves without fear.

Chapter Three

Love Yourself Without Conditions



Body shaming— why does it even exist? If we are created the way we are, why do people try to point out flaws as if they were mistakes? When we are learning to love our bodies, why do others make us question that love? No one is here to judge anyone. So stop finding faults within yourself just because someone else did. We are beautiful the way we are.

There may be creams and treatments that can hide scars, but for how long will you keep hiding? Instead, learn to embrace them— flaunt them. Because people should love you for who you truly are, not for a version of you that is covered up.

We must start loving ourselves completely and honestly. At the end of the day, it is just us. So be independent, be strong, and stand up for yourself. Life comes only once, but it does give second chances. And when it does, don't repeat the same mistakes again.

Trust yourself. Believe that you can. Aspire to begin, aspire to explore, because trying to “become something” just to fit expectations can mislead you. Instead, discover who you truly are.

Change is not easy. Transforming your life from what it was to what it can be requires courage and commitment. And commitment is one of the hardest choices to make. But once you choose it, stay true to it. Many people today fake commitment and they don’t stand by their words. Be different. Stick to your words, and you will see progress.

If you can do something, do it. If you truly cannot, then don’t force it, but never hold yourself back out of fear. Why imitate others? Choose your own path. If you want something meaningful in life, be ready to explore, to take risks, to become an adventurer of your own journey. Stop following others blindly ...dare to become someone others are inspired to follow.

We are not perfect, and we are not meant to be. If someone calls you “perfect” take it lightly—it may just be a superficial compliment. Life is not about perfection, it is about effort and commitment every single day. Effort is not easy, it takes effort to even show effort. But when you truly care about something, it reflects in what you do. Keep going, and you will see transformation.

Love yourself enough to set standards for your own life, standards you are not willing to compromise. If you live by someone else’s standards, you will never truly be happy. Life offers us many experiences, and we must be willing to accept them all. The wings of transformation are built through patience and struggle. Nothing can stop you from creating the life you dream of— except yourself.

Every challenge you face carries a lesson. Embrace it. Every individual is blessed with unique abilities. Discover yours and nurture them. Use your time wisely, because time management is what helps you grow and move forward.

If you are a student, be punctual. If you have responsibilities, honor them on time. It may seem small, but it builds discipline, one of the hardest yet most powerful habits.

Do what you are passionate about. When you work with passion, you give your whole heart to it. It's one life—live it fully. Strengthen your talent with passion and aim high. Only then can you achieve something truly meaningful.

Your thoughts hold immense power. Let them grow freely, because they can take you to places others only dream of. Step out of your comfort zone. Don't limit yourself. Whenever you get an opportunity, seize it. Explore new experiences because they shape who you become.

At times, you may not enjoy what you are doing. In those moments, try to find purpose in it. Learn to love the process. Because the future belongs to those who stay consistent, focused, and hopeful.

Trust the journey. Trust the process. And remember ,don't stop when you are tired, stop when you are done.

And maybe that is where self-love actually begins.

Not when you suddenly become confident.

Not when the world starts appreciating you.

Not when you finally look “**perfect**” in your own eyes.

Maybe self-love begins the moment you stop being against yourself.

Because honestly, we are already fighting enough battles outside. The last thing we need is to come home to ourselves and continue the war inside our own mind too.

There was a time when I thought loving yourself meant always being happy with yourself. **Always** feeling confident. **Always** knowing your worth. But growing up made me realize that self-love is much quieter than that. Sometimes self-love is simply surviving days that mentally exhaust you. Sometimes it is getting out of bed

even when your thoughts feel heavy. Sometimes it is forgiving yourself for not having everything figured out yet.

We often think healing should look beautiful. We think once we heal, we will never cry again, never overthink again, never feel broken again. But healing does not work like that.

Some days you feel okay.

Some days you feel like yourself again.

And some days, one small memory ruins your entire mood without warning.

That does not mean you are weak.

That does not mean all your progress disappeared.

It simply means healing is not linear.

And I wish more people talked about this honestly.

People nowadays only show the beautiful side of healing — the glow-ups, the confidence, the smiles, the better days. But nobody talks about the nights where you sit quietly trying to understand why something still hurts even after so much time. Nobody talks about how exhausting it feels to constantly act strong.

Sometimes we become so used to comforting others that we forget we need comfort too.

And I think that is one of the saddest things ever.

We check up on everyone.

We listen to everyone.

We try understanding everyone.

But when it comes to ourselves, we become harsh.

We blame ourselves for resting.

We blame ourselves for crying.

We blame ourselves for being emotional.

We blame ourselves for not healing fast enough.

But why?

Why are we so patient with others and so cruel to ourselves?

I realized something very important while growing up, the way we talk to ourselves matters more than we think.

Because even if the whole world speaks kindly to you, one negative thought from your own mind can still destroy your peace.

There are people who look confident outside but silently hate themselves inside. And honestly, I think that is what this generation struggles with the most. We know how to post smiling pictures. We know how to laugh in front of people. But very few people truly know how to sit alone with themselves peacefully.

And maybe that is why so many people are emotionally tired nowadays.

We are constantly trying to become *“better.” Better grades. Better appearance. Better lifestyle. Better personality. Better future. Better everything.*

It almost feels like we are never allowed to simply exist without pressure.

Even resting feels guilty nowadays.

The moment we take a break, we feel unproductive. The moment we slow down, we feel left behind. The moment we see someone doing better than us, we start questioning our own progress.

But life is not a race.

And your worth was never supposed to depend on how productive you are.

Some people are healing silently.

Some people are surviving silently.

Some people are trying their best silently.

Not everyone's progress is visible.

I think self-love also means understanding that you are allowed to grow at your own pace. You are allowed to take time. You are allowed to restart. You are allowed to feel confused sometimes.

Nobody truly has life figured out completely.

And another thing I learned is that self-love is not loud all the time.

Sometimes the quietest things are actually the strongest forms of self-love.

Like—sleeping on time, drinking enough water, walking away from draining situations, protecting your peace, saying “**no**” without guilt,

taking breaks, crying when needed instead of bottling everything up.

These things may seem small, but they matter.

Because taking care of yourself is not selfish.

I know many people who keep abandoning themselves just to keep others comfortable. They keep saying yes when they want to say no. They keep forgiving things that deeply hurt them. They keep exhausting themselves emotionally just so nobody leaves them.

But slowly, while trying to keep everyone else, they lose themselves.

And honestly, nothing is more painful than becoming a stranger to your own self.

That is why learning self-respect is equally important as learning self-love.

Self-love tells you to care for yourself.

Self-respect tells you not to tolerate disrespect repeatedly.

There is a difference.

Sometimes loving yourself means leaving situations that no longer feel healthy for your mind. Sometimes it means distancing yourself from things that constantly make you question your worth. Sometimes it means choosing peace over attachment.

People often confuse self-respect with ego. But there is a huge difference between the two. Ego wants **superiority**. Self-respect wants **peace**.

You do not need to become rude to protect yourself. You simply need to stop shrinking yourself for people who only appreciate you when you are convenient for them.

I also believe one thing deeply, you cannot hate yourself into becoming someone you love.

No matter how much you criticize yourself, insult yourself, compare yourself, or pressure yourself, healing will never come from hatred.

Growth needs patience too.

The younger version of us deserved kindness.

And honestly, the current version of us deserves kindness too.

Maybe you made mistakes.

Maybe you trusted the wrong people.

Maybe you stayed too long somewhere you should have left earlier.

Maybe you ignored your own feelings for too long.

But you were learning.

And people forget that sometimes survival itself becomes the biggest achievement.

You do not have to become perfect overnight.

You do not have to heal in a straight line.

You do not have to prove your worth every single day.

Sometimes simply continuing despite everything is already enough.

And maybe loving yourself without conditions means this,
Loving yourself on the days you feel beautiful and on the days you do not.
Loving yourself when you succeed and when you fail too.
Loving yourself when life feels clear and when everything feels confusing.
Loving yourself when people stay and even when they leave.
Because if your love for yourself only exists during your best moments, then it is not really self-love at all.

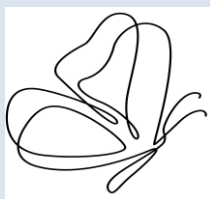
Real self-love stays even during the difficult phases.

Even during the messy phases.
Even during the lonely phases.
Even during the healing phases.
And maybe that is the kind of love we all deserve from ourselves.
Not perfect love.
Not loud love.
Not performative love.
Just honest love.
The kind that quietly says, ***“Even after everything, I still choose myself.”***

“The world will always find flaws in you. Do not become one of them”

Chapter Four

#LIFE



What is life, according to me?

I know many poets, authors, philosophers, and knowledgeable individuals have spoken about life. Each of them carries their own understanding, shaped by their experiences. And while I respect all those perspectives, mine comes from what I have personally lived and felt. I'm not saying theirs is less meaningful, but mine is deeply real to me.

For me, life is a game. We are the players. The problems we face are the hurdles, sometimes they burden us, sometimes they teach us. But in this game, there are only two choices: to move forward or to give up. There is no pause button, no replay, no starting over from the same point. Life keeps moving, whether we are ready or not.

You can try to control or manipulate things, but not forever. At some point, you will get tired. Life has its own way of unfolding. It offers you surprises, some that lifts you up, and some that breaks you down. But maybe that's exactly what it's meant to do. Maybe it

shakes you to remind you where you lost yourself, or to push you back onto the path you were meant to walk.

Along the way, you meet all kinds of people—some who make you laugh, some who confuse you, some who disturb your peace, and some who leave a mark you can never forget. I've encountered many such people in my life. Some taught me lessons I never expected to learn.

There were times when I lowered my own standards just to match someone else's level, only to realize later that it wasn't even worth it. I gave my time, my energy, and my emotions to people who didn't deserve them. And that realization is painful but also powerful. Because it teaches you to value yourself more.

But life isn't only about hard lessons. It also gives you beautiful experiences, moments that stay with you forever.

One such moment in my life was when I felt happy even after losing.

Back in my 10th standard, I participated in a contest held at my school. After several rounds, I made it to the final. It was something I had been waiting for, and at that time, my mind was completely focused on one thing *winning*. The word **win** echoed in my thoughts every single moment.

But on the final day, something felt off. I lacked confidence. Even though I had practiced a lot and stayed up thinking about it, I couldn't give my best performance. I didn't win the title.

I cried when the results were announced. But deep down, I felt something unexpected, I felt happy.

Because that moment taught me something important. It made me realize that failure is not the end. Maybe I lost in front of the world, but I knew how hard I had tried. And that mattered more. Sometimes, you don't win for others, you win for yourself. Your effort, your growth, your courage is the real victory.

These days, people are always busy placing others at the top of their priority list. But what I've learned is simple, put yourself first. Not

out of selfishness, but out of self-respect. Because at the end of the day, everything you do studying, working, struggling is for your own life. So why not start valuing yourself from now on ?

Another time I felt deeply alive was when I experienced love.

People often say love happens only once. But in my case, it didn't. And I know I may be judged for that but that's okay. Being judged is not new, and I've learned to accept it.

Love, for me, was intense and emotional. I'm someone who feels deeply, and when I cared, I cared with my whole heart. The experiences I had taught me a lot about emotions, expectations, and reality.

Sometimes, I wondered if what I felt was truly returned. I searched for clarity, for honesty, for answers. And often, the answers weren't clear. That's when I realized something important, real feelings should not feel like confusion. When something is true, it doesn't hesitate to express itself.

I'm not here to judge anyone's idea of love. But I believe that love is not just a label, it's about effort, honesty, and the willingness to stand by each other. Without that, it becomes just another word.

These experiences made me understand that life is not only about winning, losing, or even loving. It's about how you feel while living those moments. Did you enjoy it? Did you learn from it? Did it change you?

In my case, even when I lost, I gained memories, growth, and understanding. And I believe many others feel the same way too. Because at the end of the day, what truly matters is not the pressure or the result, it's the happiness you felt and the moments you lived.

The more you are happy, the more likely you are to perform well. The more stressed you are, the more likely you are to lose focus.

Life is not perfect. It's unpredictable, messy, emotional but it is also meaningful. And maybe that's what makes it beautiful.

Life is strange.

Sometimes it feels beautiful, peaceful, and full of hope. And sometimes it feels heavy enough to make us question everything. One moment, everything feels fine, and the next moment, life changes completely without even giving us a warning. That is the thing about life, it never stays the same.

And maybe that is why understanding life is so difficult.

Sometimes life changes us so quietly that we do not even realize we are becoming a different person until one day we look back at ourselves.

The things that once mattered to us no longer matter the same way. The people we once could not spend a day without slowly become strangers. The version of ourselves we once knew so well slowly starts changing too.

And honestly, I think that is one of the most emotional parts of life, realizing that change is unavoidable.

Life is not a bed full of roses. People often say this casually, but when you actually start living life, you understand how true it really is. There are ups and downs, happiness and heartbreaks, peace and chaos, success and failures. Some days make you feel alive, while some days emotionally exhaust you completely.

But with time, everything changes.

And I think that is one of the biggest truths life teaches us.

Bad days do not stay forever. Pain does not stay forever. Confusion does not stay forever. Even the heaviest storms eventually pass. Better days come too. Peace comes too. Happiness returns too.

That is why no matter how difficult life becomes, we should never completely lose hope.

Not every chapter of life feels beautiful while living it, but that does not mean the story is over.

Sometimes the chapters that hurt the most later become the chapters that teach us the most too.

Life has a very strange way of teaching lessons. It does not always explain things gently. Sometimes it breaks you first and teaches you later. Sometimes it lets you fall just so you can understand how to stand back up again.

Life is a very strict teacher. It gives us tests first and the lesson later. And honestly, I learned this in a very unexpected way when I was younger.

Back when I was in hostel, our school was located in a very remote area surrounded by nature. During picnics or outings, we often had to climb small rocky places or uneven paths. It may sound normal to many people, but for me, it was terrifying.

As a child, I was extremely sensitive. Even now I still am, but back then it was much more intense. I had a huge fear of getting hurt. I was scared of cuts, injuries, bruises, anything where blood came out of my body frightened me badly. Even the smallest scratch would make me panic.

One day during an outing, my friend encouraged me to climb with her. I was scared at first, but she kept saying, “Let’s do it together.” So finally, I agreed.

And while climbing, I slipped and fell.

It was not a dangerous fall, but I still got hurt. I got a small cut on my knee, and the scar is honestly still there even now. The moment I saw blood, I started crying uncontrollably. I was only in class three, around seven years old, so obviously I got scared.

My friend kept trying to calm me down, saying: “It’s okay. Don’t cry. It will heal.”

But honestly, the more I looked at the blood, the more frightened I became.

Then one of our teachers came near me and said something very simple, “*Little girl, if there is no pain, there is no gain.*”

At that age, I did not completely understand those words. But slowly, while growing up, I realized how true they actually were.

Because life works exactly like that.

Without pain, we rarely grow.

Without failure, we rarely learn.

Without difficult moments, we rarely understand ourselves deeply.

After that incident, I slowly stopped being so afraid of trying new things. Even when something felt difficult or scary, I still tried. Because I realized that fear would always exist, but if I kept running away from every difficult situation, I would never grow.

And maybe life is exactly that, learning despite fear.

Mistakes also teach us many things.

Honestly, I have made many mistakes in my life too. Some small, some emotional, some unforgettable. But one thing I always believed is that mistakes are not the end of a person unless they refuse to learn from them.

And personally, I follow something in my life called the “**Three A’s.**”

The first A is Accept.

Accept that you made a mistake. Admit it honestly instead of running away from it. Many people destroy relationships, trust, and peace simply because their ego becomes bigger than their honesty.

The second A is Apologize.

Apologize genuinely to the people you hurt. Not because you are weak, but because accountability matters. Saying sorry does not make someone smaller. In fact, it shows maturity.

And the third A is Avoid repeating it again.

Because apologizing means nothing if the same hurt keeps happening repeatedly. Real growth happens when we learn from our mistakes instead of normalizing them.

And honestly, these three A's made my life better in many ways.

Life itself is a learning process. Nobody becomes perfect overnight. Nobody understands everything immediately. We are all learning slowly through experiences, emotions, failures, regrets, memories, and growth.

That is why I believe people should stop being so hard on themselves.

This generation constantly feels pressured to “have everything figured out.” Good grades, successful future, perfect appearance, stable emotions, clear goals and everything. But life does not work according to fixed timings.

Just because someone is ahead of you does not mean you are behind in life.

We live in a world full of competition. Everywhere you look, someone seems more successful, more talented, more confident, more beautiful, more settled. And without realizing it, we start measuring our progress using someone else's journey.

But every person's timeline is different.

Some people succeed early.

Some people bloom later.

Some people find themselves quickly.

Some people take years.

And none of these journeys are wrong.

A flower blooming later than another flower does not make it less beautiful.

Life is not a race where everyone must arrive at the same destination at the same time.

Sometimes the strongest people are not the ones who reached success the fastest. Sometimes the strongest people are simply the ones who kept going despite everything life threw at them.

And honestly, I think people underestimate silent strength.

The strength it takes to wake up after emotionally exhausting nights.

The strength it takes to keep trying after failures.

The strength it takes to smile even while healing internally.

The strength it takes to continue when life feels uncertain.

Not all strength looks loud.

Sometimes strength quietly survives.

And maybe that is why I truly believe that ***no one can stop a star from shining.***

No matter how much darkness surrounds the sky, no one can stop a star from shining. And maybe life works the same way too. No matter how difficult the phases become, your light does not disappear. Sometimes it only hides behind heavy moments, and it becomes your responsibility to find that light within yourself again.

There will be days where life feels unfair. Days where you question yourself. Days where you feel emotionally tired. Days where nothing makes sense.

But even then, life keeps moving.

And maybe that is the beauty of it too.

Life teaches us to continue.

To heal.

To learn.

To restart.

To outgrow.

To become stronger slowly.

Not perfectly.

Not easily.

But honestly.

And maybe life was never meant to be perfect anyway.

Maybe life is simply a collection of lessons, memories, mistakes, people, endings, beginnings, pain, healing, laughter, growth, and survival — all existing together at once.

And despite everything life takes from us sometimes, it also gives us reasons to continue.

That is why, no matter how difficult life becomes, always remember this, **Better days are still coming.**

“Life gives everyone different stories to live, different battles to fight and different lessons to learn”

Chapter Five

She Becomes



Being a girl, being a woman is not just a role. It is a journey.

It is a blessing, yes. But it is also a path filled with experiences that demand strength, patience, and courage often more than what is seen from the outside.

A girl is born into the world just like anyone else pure, unaware, untouched by expectations. In her early years, she laughs freely, plays without limits, and lives without understanding the labels that the world will slowly place upon her.

But as she grows, things begin to change.

She starts becoming aware of herself not just as a person, but as a girl. The way she sits, the way she talks, the way she dresses, everything begins to be observed, corrected, and sometimes judged. Slowly, without even realizing it, she starts adjusting herself to fit into what is considered *acceptable*.

And then comes one of the biggest transitions, her teenage years.

This is the phase where she begins to understand her body, her emotions, and her identity. The beginning of the menstrual cycle is not just a biological change it is an emotional and mental shift too. At a young age, handling something so new, so personal, can feel overwhelming. The physical discomfort, the mood swings, the confusion, it all becomes a part of her life.

And yet, she learns.

She learns to manage the pain, to carry herself through discomfort, to continue her daily life even when it feels difficult. It becomes something she lives with not because it is easy, but because she becomes strong enough to handle it.

As she moves further into her teenage years, the world around her begins to feel different. Expectations grow. Responsibilities increase. She is told to be careful, to be aware, to protect herself. There are unspoken rules she is expected to follow, rules that she did not create, yet must live by.

But at the same time, something beautiful begins to happen and she starts discovering herself.

She begins to understand her strengths, her interests, her dreams. She realizes that she is capable of more than what the world may assume. She begins to question things, to think independently, to form her own opinions.

And slowly, she starts becoming independent.

In today's world, women are no longer limited to boundaries that once existed. They study, they work, they earn, they lead. They build their own lives. They are no longer dependent on anyone for survival, they are creating their own paths.

But independence does not mean the absence of struggle.

It simply means choosing to stand strong despite it.

There are emotional battles, self-doubt, insecurity, overthinking. There are societal pressures, how to look, how to behave, how to live. There are moments when she questions herself, moments when she feels like she is not enough.

But even in those moments, she continues.

Because that is what defines her, not perfection, but persistence.

Then comes another phase of life that only a woman experiences—**motherhood**. The ability to carry a life within herself is something extraordinary. It is not just physical strength, it is emotional depth, sacrifice, and unconditional love.

But even beyond that, being a woman is not defined by a single role.

She can be a daughter, a friend, a leader, a dreamer, a creator all at once.

And somewhere between all these roles, she is still discovering who she truly is.

Now, standing at the edge of adulthood at seventeen, about to turn eighteen you begin to see things differently.

You are no longer the girl who didn't understand the world.

You are someone who has started facing it.

You have seen challenges. You have felt insecurities. You have questioned yourself. But you have also grown. You have learned. You have become stronger.

And that is the beauty of this journey.

Being a woman is not about being compared.

It is about becoming.

Becoming stronger with every hardship.

Becoming wiser with every mistake.

Becoming confident with every step forward.

Yes, the journey is not easy.

But it is powerful.

And every girl, in her own way, is quietly becoming someone incredible

And every girl, in her own way, is quietly becoming a woman.

Not all at once.

Not overnight.

But slowly, through experiences, lessons, heartbreaks, responsibilities, pain, healing, and growth.

Because becoming a woman is not only about age. It is about understanding the world differently. It is about carrying softness and strength together at the same time.

And somewhere during this journey, a girl starts learning something very early, **safety**.

A girl learns safety before she truly learns freedom.

Especially in countries like India, this is something almost every girl grows up hearing. *“Come home early,” “Do not stay outside too late,” “Be careful while walking,” “Do not trust strangers,” “Share your location,” “Call once you reach.”* These words become such a normal part of a girl’s life that sometimes we forget how heavy they actually are.

And honestly, behind all these warnings are not restrictions alone, but fear too.

Fear built from the reality of the world.

Because every day, somewhere, another girl becomes a headline. Another girl becomes a victim of someone else’s cruelty. We hear about harassment, assault, violence, and unsafe spaces so often that girls are taught caution before confidence.

And maybe that is one of the saddest parts of girlhood.

A girl should learn to dream before danger.

Freedom before fear.

Confidence before caution.

But reality often teaches the opposite.

Even today, there are places where girls still do not feel fully safe walking alone. Even today, many girls hold their keys tightly while walking home, avoid dark roads, avoid speaking too loudly, avoid staying out late and avoid trusting too quickly.

Not because they want to live in fear, but because the world taught them to protect themselves before they even fully understood themselves.

And yet, despite all of this, women continue.

They continue studying.

They continue dreaming.

They continue building lives for themselves.

And honestly, that itself is strength.

People often misunderstand what a strong woman looks like.

They think strong women never cry.

Never break down.

Never feel overwhelmed.

Never get emotionally exhausted.

But that is not true at all.

A strong woman can cry and still continue.

A strong woman can feel pain and still survive.

A strong woman can feel lost and still find herself again.

Real strength is not the absence of emotions. Real strength is continuing despite them.

Sometimes people call girls *“too emotional”* as if emotions are weaknesses. But in reality, emotions are what make women deeply human.

And honestly, I never understood why society treats crying like something shameful.

Whenever girls cry, people say: “You’re too sensitive.”

“You’re overreacting.”

“You’re weak.”

But why?

Why is expressing emotions considered weakness? Why are girls expected to silently carry everything without reacting?

Personally, whenever I feel overwhelmed, lonely, disappointed, or emotionally drained, I cry. Not because I am weak, but because I am human. I let my emotions flow because bottling everything inside only makes the pain heavier.

And honestly, after crying, sometimes you finally understand yourself better.

There is a famous saying people often use **“Boys don’t cry.”**

But who decided that?

Pain does not choose gender. Emotions do not choose gender. Human beings are meant to feel things deeply sometimes. Crying is not a weakness for boys, and emotions are not a weakness for girls.

Feeling deeply simply means you are alive.

And maybe only a girl’s girl truly understands this emotional side of womanhood.

The silent overthinking.

The emotional attachment.

The random tears at night.

The pretending to be okay in front of everyone.

The way one small thing can stay in your heart for days.

These are things many girls never explain fully, yet silently carry every day.

But girlhood is not only a pain.

There is beauty in it too.

There is beauty in friendships between girls. In shared laughter. In fixing each other's hair. In helping each other through heartbreaks. In random late-night conversations. In secretly understanding each other without needing full explanations.

Sometimes another girl understands your silence better than your words.

And honestly, there is something very comforting about being understood without needing to explain everything.

Girls heal each other in ways the world rarely notices.

A compliment from another girl.

A hug during breakdowns.

A "text me once you reach home."

A "you deserve better."

A "I'm proud of you."

These things may look small from the outside, but emotionally, they mean a lot.

Because women understand struggles that are often invisible.

And while growing up, another thing a girl slowly learns is that society always has expectations waiting for her.

How she should look.

How she should behave.

How she should dress.

How she should speak.

How she should live.

If she is too quiet, people question her confidence.

If she speaks too much, people call her out loud.

If she is emotional, she is “too sensitive.”

If she is independent, she is “too difficult.”

No matter what she does, someone somewhere always has an opinion.

But a woman was never born only to fit into society's expectations.

She was born to become herself.

And honestly, I think that is one of the hardest yet most beautiful parts of becoming a woman — learning to become yourself in a world constantly trying to shape you into something else.

There comes a point where a woman slowly stops explaining herself.

She stops explaining why she dresses a certain way.

Why she chooses certain dreams?

Why she protects her peace?

Why she distances herself from certain people?

Why she chooses herself?

Because eventually she realizes that some people are committed to misunderstanding her no matter how clearly she explains herself.

And peace becomes more important than constantly defending her existence.

There is also a huge misunderstanding about femininity.

People often think femininity means weakness, softness, dependency, or fragility.

But femininity is much deeper than that.

Femininity is strength wrapped in softness.

It is waking up and continuing despite emotional exhaustion.

It is comforting others while silently carrying your own pain.

It is remaining kind in a world that constantly hardens people.

It is surviving situations that were never easy to survive.

There is nothing weak about softness.

In fact, staying soft after experiencing pain is one of the strongest things a person can do.

And honestly, I think every woman deserves to understand this:
You do not need to become emotionless to become strong.

Strength and softness can exist together.

A woman can be independent and emotional.

Strong and gentle.

Confident and sensitive.

Soft and powerful.

That balance itself is beautiful.

And while growing older, women slowly start understanding themselves differently too.

Their dreams become bigger.

Their standards become higher.

Their self-respect becomes stronger.

They no longer only dream about surviving. They dream about peace, success, happiness, freedom, stability, and becoming someone they are proud of.

Because today's women are no longer silently limiting themselves.

They are studying.

Leading.

Creating.

Working.

Healing.

Building lives for themselves.

And even after all the struggles, expectations, emotional battles, and silent pain, women still continue becoming stronger versions of themselves.

Not perfectly.

Not easily.

But beautifully.

And maybe that is the real meaning of womanhood.

Not perfection.

Not comparison.

Not society's approval.

But growth.

The quiet, painful, beautiful process of becoming someone stronger while still remaining yourself.

Because every woman carries a story the world may never fully understand.

And yet, every day, she still rises.

"No one notices the exact moment a girl becomes a woman but she feels it in every silent battle she survives"

Chapter Six

The Version of Me That I Almost Forgot



Getting back to the real you is not easy.

In fact, it's one of the hardest things a person can go through.

Losing yourself... getting drowned in your own thoughts, your own actions, your own situations many of us go through this. And sometimes, we don't even realize when it starts.

You slowly begin to change.

Not because you want to, but because things around you do.

Watching people change their attitude towards you hurts. It doesn't just hurt on the surface, it hits somewhere deep inside. And what hurts more is remembering how they once were, how they once treated you better, how they once cared.

It's strange how people change.

Or maybe it's not always them.

Sometimes, it's you too.

It was because of you that certain things began. And maybe, they were never meant to have a happy ending. That doesn't mean you blame yourself for everything, but it does mean you pause and think about your part in it.

Never be quick to blame others.

Take a moment. **Reflect.**

Because in the middle of all this, we start losing something very important *ourselves*.

We begin to overthink.

We begin to question our own actions.

We begin to wonder if we are "too much" or "not enough."

And slowly, without realizing it, we start holding ourselves back.

We live in a time where even doing something good feels risky.

If you try to do something nice, people might say you're just trying to be the center of attention.

If you stay quiet, they ignore you.

If you speak up, they judge you.

So what do we do?

We stop.

We stop trying.

We stop expressing ourselves.

We stop being ourselves.

Not because we want to, but because we are scared.

Scared of being judged.

Scared of being talked about.

Scared of standing out.

And that fear builds silently.

It makes us stay inside our comfort zones.

It makes us doubt ourselves before even trying.

It makes us think a hundred times before doing the simplest things.

“What will people say?”

“Will they misunderstand me?”

“Am I doing too much?”

These thoughts become louder than our own voice.

And somewhere between all this noise, we lose who we really are.

We start comparing ourselves.

We start feeling like we are not enough.

We start becoming someone we were never meant to be.

But the truth is the more you try to fit into others expectations, the more you drift away from your real self.

At the same time, life throws things at us that leave marks.

Things that hurt us, break us, and sometimes even stay with us longer than we expect. These experiences don't just disappear. They stay. They leave an imprint.

We do get sudden panic, sudden breakdowns because of things that once hurt us deeply. Healing from that is not instant. It takes time.

A broken heart is not something that gets fixed overnight.

When something breaks into pieces again and again, it cannot be put back together all at once.

It needs patience.

It needs time.

And that is why before hurting someone, think.

Because what might feel small to you can become a lifetime scar for someone else. People deal with pain in ways you may never see. Some stay silent. Some isolate themselves. Some slowly start damaging themselves, emotionally or physically.

So never be the reason behind someone's pain.

Maturity doesn't come with age.

A 15-year-old can be more mature than a 23-year-old.

Maturity is in understanding.

In choosing peace over reaction.

In learning, growing, and letting things be when needed.

A mature person knows how to handle situations without making them worse.

They give *space*.

They stay *patient*.

They *grow* through what they *go* through.

They carry *self-control*, *self-discipline*, and *self-respect*.

Self-control is knowing where to stop.

Self-discipline is doing what is right even when it is hard.

Self-respect is knowing your worth and never letting anyone take that away.

Because self-respect can be lost in a blink of an eye.

Don't let others control your life.

You are the owner of your life, own it.

Don't give your energy to people who are only disturbing your peace.

Not everyone deserves your attention.

And one more thing—

Don't show people your plans.

Show them your results.

Because the moment you stop living for people's opinions,
that is the moment you start getting back to yourself.

Getting back to yourself doesn't mean everything suddenly becomes perfect.

There will still be fear.

There will still be doubt.

There will still be days when you feel lost again.

But the difference is, you don't stay there.

You try again.

You stand up again.

You choose yourself again.

And slowly, piece by piece, you rebuild the person you once were or maybe, someone even stronger.

There was a point in my life where I stopped recognizing myself completely. Not physically, not suddenly, but slowly. Quietly. In ways no one around me could notice at first. And honestly, I could not notice it either. That is the scary thing about losing yourself. It does not happen overnight. It happens little by little until one day you wake up and realize you do not even know who you are anymore.

A year ago, I was in a phase where I had completely forgotten myself. I stopped being the person I once was. The happy version of me, the carefree version of me, the version that laughed loudly, spoke freely, and lived for herself slowly started disappearing.

And the saddest part is, I did not even realize it while it was happening.

I became so emotionally attached to one person that my entire life started revolving around them. Every morning when I woke up, my first thought was not about myself anymore. It was about him. What would he be doing? Would he text me today? Did he eat? Was he upset? Would we talk properly? Would we fight? Would he stay?

My day started with him and ended with him.

I forgot how it felt to wake up and think about my own goals, my own happiness, my own peace. Everything became about making sure someone else stayed comfortable in my life while I silently ignored my own comfort.

I cared too much.

And sometimes people romanticize that. They say, “Aww, that’s love.”

But no.

Losing yourself is not love.

Forgetting your own worth is not love.

Neglecting yourself is not love.

Depending emotionally on someone to the point where your mood depends on their behavior is not love.

That is emotional exhaustion disguised as attachment.

I gave too much of myself away without realizing I was emptying myself in the process. If love had percentages back then, maybe ninety-five percent of me belonged to him, and the remaining five percent was whatever I had left for myself.

I helped him with everything. I prioritized him constantly. I adjusted my routine around him. I ignored my own emotions just to protect his. I stayed available even when I was mentally drained. And slowly, without realizing, I stopped becoming my own person.

I became someone whose happiness depended on another human being.

And that is dangerous.

Because the moment they leave, you are left standing there asking yourself one terrifying question:

“Who am I without them?”

That question broke me.

After things ended, I remember feeling completely lost. It felt like I had built my entire emotional world around someone, and suddenly everything collapsed at once. People say breakups hurt because you lose someone, but I think what hurts more is realizing how much of yourself disappeared during the process.

Because after it ended, I was not only grieving the person.

I was grieving myself too.

The version of me I had abandoned.

The version that once loved herself naturally.

The version that once laughed without waiting for someone’s message first.

The version that existed before emotional dependency consumed everything.

And healing from that was not easy.

People think healing happens in dramatic moments. They think one motivational quote fixes everything, *One speech, One move on, One distraction.*

But healing is actually painfully slow.

It happens in tiny moments.

It happens when you wake up one morning and realize you checked your phone less.

It happens when you finally eat without feeling heavy inside.

It happens when their name hurts a little less than yesterday.

It happens when you laugh genuinely after weeks.

It happens when you stop rereading old conversations.

It happens when you stop waiting.

And honestly, healing is exhausting too.

There were days I felt okay for five minutes and then suddenly broke down again. There were nights when memories hit me randomly. There were moments I thought I had moved on completely, but one small reminder pulled everything back.

And that is normal.

Healing is not linear.

Some days you feel strong.

Some days you feel like you restarted from zero.

But that does not mean you are failing.

It just means you are human.

One thing that truly helped me during that phase was journaling. I wrote everything down, every emotion, every thought, every breakdown, every little improvement. I wrote about whether I missed him that day. Whether I still had hope. Whether I was angry. Whether I was healing.

And slowly, through those pages, I started meeting myself again.

Not the broken version.

The real version.

The version that still existed underneath all the pain.

I realized something very important during that phase: the biggest transformations in life never happen instantly.

A baby does not become an adult overnight.

A wound does not heal immediately.

And a person who lost themselves cannot magically rebuild overnight either.

Everything takes time.

And honestly, time deserves more credit than people give it.

Time teaches.

Time reveals.

Time heals what people thought would destroy you forever.

Slowly, I started returning to myself. I started caring about my own peace again. I started enjoying my own company again. I started remembering who I was before I became emotionally dependent on someone else's presence.

And maybe that is what this chapter truly means.

“The version of me that I almost forgot.”

Because I did not completely lose myself forever.

I just lost connection with myself for a while.

And I think many people go through this.

Maybe not through love.

Maybe through friendships.

Family pressure.

Academic stress.

Social validation.

Depression.

Loneliness.

Sometimes life becomes so loud that we stop hearing our own voice.

And when that happens, we slowly become strangers to ourselves.

That is why self-connection matters so much.

You must remind yourself constantly that before being someone's favorite person, someone's partner, someone's friend, someone's comfort, you are your own person first.

You belong to yourself before you belong to anyone else.

And yes, love people deeply. Care for them genuinely. Support them wholeheartedly. But never abandon yourself while doing it.

Because people can leave.

Situations can change.

Relationships can end.

But at the end of every single phase of your life, you still have to live with yourself.

That is why your relationship with yourself matters the most.

There is also another truth no one talks about enough, sometimes pain changes your personality temporarily.

And that happened to me too.

I became quieter.

More distant.

More emotionally tired.

More careful.

I stopped trusting easily.

I stopped expressing fully.

And maybe some people called it maturity, but honestly, sometimes it was just emotional exhaustion.

Not every strong person became strong naturally.

Some people became strong because life gave them no other option.

And I think readers of our generation understand this deeply.

We laugh online while struggling privately.

We post pictures while fighting silent battles.

We say I'm okay because explaining feels exhausting.

But deep inside, many people are still trying to reconnect with the versions of themselves they lost somewhere along the way.

And if you are one of them, this is your reminder:

You are still there.

The real you still exists underneath all the confusion, heartbreak, pressure, overthinking, and emotional exhaustion.

You did not disappear forever.

You just got lost while surviving.

And survival changes people.

There is a theory called “**survival of the fittest**,” given by **Charles Darwin**. And honestly, sometimes life feels exactly like that. We are all trying to survive emotionally, mentally, socially, academically in every possible way.

But surviving should not mean abandoning yourself completely.

Be selfish sometimes.

Not cruel selfish.

Not heartless selfish.

But protective selfish.

Protect your peace.

Protect your identity.

Protect your emotional health.

Do not pour so much into others that you leave nothing for yourself.

Because once you lose yourself completely, rebuilding takes longer than people think.

And maybe that is the biggest lesson this phase taught me:

Love should add to your life, not erase you from it.

Because the right people will never make you forget yourself.

They will help you become more of who you already are.

And maybe that is what healing truly is.

Not becoming a completely new person.

But finally returning to the version of yourself that always deserved love too.

Because in the end, getting back to yourself is not about going backwards— it's about becoming who you were meant to be all along.

“Sometimes the hardest thing is not losing people, but losing the version of yourself you once loved”

Chapter Seven

A Home I Didn't Choose But Learned To Love



I never chose this place.

Hostel life—this is something many of us have heard about, but not everyone truly understands.

When we are enrolled in a school that has a hostel, people often call it a benefit. But as a child, I never saw it that way.

At six years old, I didn't even know what a hostel was. I was told we were going to a hotel, and like any child, I believed it without a second thought. The journey felt normal, almost exciting, until my parents left me there, saying they would be back in a minute. I waited, not understanding what was happening. Minutes passed, then hours but no one came back. That was the moment I realized this was not a place I was visiting. This was a place I had to stay.

And yet, I had no idea that the place I never chose... would slowly become a home I would never forget.

That night, I cried a lot.

I missed my parents. I felt scared, lost, and completely alone.

But I wasn't entirely alone.

My brother was there. He had already been staying there for a year. Seeing me cry, he came to me, gave me an Oreo strawberry biscuit which had just come out at that time and tried to comfort me.

That small moment, that simple gesture, is still one of the most precious memories I carry with me.

And somehow, that night, I fell asleep.

Slowly, I began to adapt.

The hostel I stayed in was not just a hostel, it felt like a home. We didn't live like strangers. We lived like a family.

We had different groups based on our classes. The little ones from nursery to class 5. Then junior girls and boys, followed by senior girls and boys. Each group had its own space, its own people, but we were all connected.

What I didn't realize back then was how much this place was shaping me.

Hostel life teaches you discipline without you even noticing it. From waking up on time to going to sleep on time, everything followed a routine. Time management became a part of life, not something you had to force yourself into.

We learned to take care of ourselves at a very young age.

We learned how to stay clean, how to manage our things, and how to be responsible.

And most importantly, we learned how to live with people.

There were fights.

There were misunderstandings.

There were moments when we didn't agree with each other.

But at the end of the day, we always chose unity over ego.

That's something I carry even today.

What made my hostel life even more special were the experiences we had.

Every Sunday was different.

One Sunday, we would go out for outings.

Another Sunday, we would watch movies together.

Then came self-cooking days, where we cooked in groups, teachers helping the younger ones, making it feel like a big family activity.

And then, the best of all were the jungle picnics.

Our school was surrounded by nature, and we would go out, cook in the jungle, laugh, and just live those moments.

Not many hostels give you that kind of life.

We celebrated everything—Easter, Good Friday, Buddha Purnima, Diwali, Christmas, birthdays. There was always something happening. Programs, events, celebrations we were always involved.

And that's where I found a part of myself.

I started coming forward.

I started speaking.

I started hosting programs.

I was chosen many times to host, and that slowly built my confidence. Being a hosteller also gave us opportunities. We were more involved, more seen, and often chosen for responsibilities like captainship.

But more than anything, it was the people who made this journey unforgettable.

The principal of my school was not just a principal. He was like a parent to all of us. Even today, I see him as my mentor. The way he guided me, believed in me, and shaped me. I don't think I would be the person I am today without that influence.

The hostel in-charges were the same.

They cared for us, supported us, and stood by us.

Yes, there were strict moments.

Yes, there were times we were scolded or even punished.

But looking back now, I understand it was never to hurt us. It was to shape us.

Of course, I missed home.

There were days when I wished I could just go back and never return. I used to say, **"I hate this place. I don't want to stay here."**

But life has a way of making you understand things later.

Because when I finally left the hostel at the age of 15, everything changed.

I came back home.

And suddenly, it felt empty.

There were no friends around all the time.

No constant noise.

No late-night talks.

No shared laughter.

Back in the hostel, I was never alone. There were always people around me. Friends who became family.

There were six of us, always together.

Talking, laughing, sharing everything.

And now, I missed that.

I still do.

I am still in contact with some of them, while I've lost touch with others. But that's how life works. People come, people go but the memories stay.

Today, at 17, when I look back, I realize something.

That place I once hated, became the place that built me.

Hostel life didn't just teach me discipline or independence.

It taught me how to live.

It taught me how to adjust, how to grow, how to stand on my own feet.

It gave me confidence.

It gave me memories.

It gave me a part of myself that I would have never discovered otherwise.

And maybe that's what life does.

It puts you in places you don't understand at first, only to make you realize later that those places were exactly what you needed.

Even after years pass, even after life changes and people move in different directions, there are still certain moments that stay fresh in our hearts like they happened yesterday. Sometimes all it takes is a song, a smell, a photograph, or even the mention of hostel life for every memory to come rushing back at once.

And like every family, we had our own chaos too.

Every Sunday we were taken for mass since it happened inside the school hall itself. We all sat there quietly in rows, trying our best to look attentive, but the funniest part was that almost everyone used to doze off. For the longest time, I thought I was the only one

struggling to stay awake until I started looking around. One by one, I would see sleepy faces, half-closed eyes, and heads slowly falling forward. But the moment hymns started, suddenly everyone became energetic again. We sang loudly as if we had been listening carefully the whole time. Looking back now, those Sundays make me laugh so much because even in our sleepiness, there was comfort in sitting there together.

Then came 2020, the year none of us will ever forget.

We were sitting in the study hall while the teachers had gone for a meeting. At that time, news about the virus had already started spreading everywhere, and all of us were discussing only one thing **“Will we get holidays?”** Secretly, every one of us was hoping the answer would be yes. We were literally counting dates in our diaries and imagining how nice it would feel to suddenly go home.

And then a hostel captain walked into the hall and announced, “You all are having holidays from tomorrow.”

The happiness that exploded in that room cannot even be explained properly. Everyone started shouting, laughing, packing books before the teachers even returned. It felt like freedom had been handed to us suddenly. None of us knew that the world outside was about to change completely. None of us knew those “few holidays” would turn into months away from each other. At that moment, all we knew was that we were happy.

And somehow, that became one of the most unforgettable memories of hostel life.

There were also memories that still make me laugh whenever I think about them.

One day during class assembly, while we were all praying seriously, a strange sound suddenly started coming from somewhere inside the classroom. At first, everyone looked confused. We kept searching around, trying to figure out where the sound was coming from. And then we discovered it, a frog had somehow gotten inside one of our friend’s bags. The moment it jumped, chaos broke out in

the class. I screamed and jumped away because the bag was right beside me. What started as a peaceful assembly immediately turned into complete madness. Even now, remembering that scene makes me laugh.

Another unforgettable memory was when one of our classmates kept irritating me and my friend so much that we finally reacted. In our anger, we ended up kicking him, and unfortunately for us, the evidence was impossible to hide because the mark of my shoe was literally visible on him. When the teacher came and scolded us, I started crying out of fear at first, but later even I could not stop laughing while looking at the situation. At that age, everything felt dramatic for five minutes and funny forever after that.

And then came the functions.

Our hostel was always full of celebrations, preparations, practices, decorations, and noise. Every group had something to perform. Some danced, some sang, some acted, and some hosted programs. But one thing that was absolutely compulsory in almost every event was Zumba. No function ever felt complete without it. Everyone participated including students, seniors, sometimes even teachers. The steps were easy, the energy was high, and somehow every single person looked happy while dancing. Those practices before functions, the excitement backstage, the last-minute mistakes, the laughter after performances, those were the moments that made hostel life feel alive.

Teachers' Day celebrations were always special too. We prepared secretly for days, trying our best to surprise the teachers. Sometimes things went according to plan, sometimes they became complete disasters, but somehow those disasters became the funniest memories later. That is the beautiful thing about hostel life, even ordinary moments become unforgettable because you experience them with people who slowly become your second family.

And maybe that is why leaving was so difficult.

The same place I once cried so hard to escape from slowly became the place I was terrified to leave behind.

The last days did not feel real. Packing bags felt strange. Looking at empty beds, empty cupboards, and silent hallways felt heavier than I expected. We took pictures, promised each other that we would always stay in contact and promised that nothing would change.

But life changes people, schedules, cities, and priorities.

Some friendships survived beautifully. Some slowly faded with time. Some people became memories.

But none of that changes what we once had.

Even today, when I think about hostel life, I do not remember only the buildings or classrooms. I remember the feelings. I remember the late-night conversations, the laughter during punishments, the excitement before outings, the comfort of knowing someone was always around. I remember how six people could sit together doing absolutely nothing and still have the best time of their lives.

And maybe that is what home truly means.

Not just walls. Not just rooms. Not just a place.

But people. Memories. Comfort. Growth. And perhaps some homes are never chosen. They simply choose to become a part of us forever.

And finally I realized the younger me kept counting the days to leave but the older me keeps counting the memories made there.

“Home is not always where you are born, sometimes it is the place that quietly shapes you into who you become”

Chapter Eight

Being One, Becoming Enough



Being an only child is often seen as a blessing.

People say, *"You must be so lucky."*

No competition. No sharing. All the attention. All the love.

And yes, maybe they are right, in some ways.

But there is a side they don't see.

Being an only child means I have never experienced what it feels like to have a sibling.

No one to fight with.

No one to share silly secrets with.

No one to sit beside me and just be there without needing any explanation.

And sometimes, that absence feels louder than anything else.

There are moments when I feel a gap, a space that no one really notices, but I feel it deeply.

The gap of being understood.

The gap of being taken care of in a way only someone your age can.

The gap of being someone's constant person.

And most of the time, it's just me.

Just me, sitting with my thoughts.

There have been days when I didn't have anyone to talk to.

Not because people weren't around but because there was no one I could truly open up to.

Because understanding is different from listening.

I have always wished for someone who would just sit and listen without judging, without interrupting, without trying to fix everything. Someone who would just understand.

And when I say someone, I don't mean just a lover.

It could be a friend, a close friend, a family member or anyone.

But the truth is, most of the time,

it was just me... my notebook... and my pen.

I wrote when I was angry.

I wrote when I felt hurt.

I wrote when I didn't know what else to do.

It became my way of speaking when I had no one to speak to.

My notebook became the listener.

My pen became my voice.

And I... became both the one who felt and the one who healed.

Things became even more real when I came back home after my hostel life.

For years, I was surrounded by people. Friends, laughter, noise, there was always someone around me.

I never felt the need for a sibling back then. I used to think, “*I’m fine on my own.*”

But when I came back home at 15, everything changed.

The house felt quiet.

Too quiet.

There were no constant conversations.

No shared jokes.

No one to just sit beside me without saying anything.

And that’s when I started feeling lonely.

Not the kind where you are physically alone but the kind where you feel like you have no one who truly gets you.

It’s not that my parents don’t understand me.

They do. They love me. They care for me in every possible way.

But sometimes, there is a gap — age gap, a generation gap.

There are small, minute things that I want to talk about, but I hesitate.

Not because I don’t trust them, but because I feel they might not fully understand it the way I want them to.

And you can’t just share everything with random people either.

So again... it comes back to me.

People often see me laughing.

They see me making others laugh.

They think I’m always happy, always okay.

But the truth is....I learned to be that way.

Because I know how it feels to be sad and not have anyone notice.

I know how it feels to miss something you've never even had.

And that's why I try to make others happy.

Not to prove anything.

Not to hide anything.

But because I genuinely don't want anyone to feel the way I have felt at times.

If I can make someone smile, even for a moment, that means something to me.

Being a single child is not just loneliness.

It also teaches you strength.

You learn how to handle things on your own.

You learn how to sit with your thoughts.

You learn how to grow without depending on others.

You become independent, emotionally and mentally.

But even strength gets tiring sometimes.

Even strong people need someone to lean on.

People say being a single child means having everything.

And yes, maybe we do have many advantages.

But there is always a silent wish hidden somewhere inside— A wish for someone who would just be there.

Someone who would understand without needing explanations.

Someone who would *stay*.

I never realized this when I was younger.

Back in the hostel, surrounded by friends, I never felt the need for a sibling. I was complete in my own way.

But now, when I see others with their siblings, even when they fight, argue, or annoy each other. I feel something.

Because at the end of the day, they still have each other.
And that's something I have never experienced.
But life doesn't give everyone the same story.
And maybe... that's okay.
Because being alone has also taught me something beautiful— It
taught me how to be there for myself.
I became my own listener.
My own support system.
My own safe place.
And maybe that's not a weakness.
Maybe that's a different kind of strength.
Being a single child is not just about being alone.
It's about learning how to hold yourself together
when there is no one else to do it for you.
And even though there are days when I wish things were different,
I also know this journey has made me who I am today.
Because sometimes, when you don't have anyone else, you learn how
to become everything for yourself.

*“I didn't have someone to hold onto...
so I learned how to hold myself together.”*

Chapter Nine

Friendship In All Its Forms



Friendship.

A word that feels so simple, yet carries some of the deepest emotions in our lives.

When I was a child, I was a very introverted person. I wasn't someone who would easily open up or make friends quickly. But as time passed, as life shaped me, I slowly became more extroverted. I learned how to talk, how to connect and how to be around people.

But even today, I believe not every connection becomes a bond, and not every bond is meant to last.

Back in Sikkim, I had my childhood best friend. She lived just five minutes away from my home. We shared a beautiful bond, one of those innocent friendships that don't need too many words.

She is still there in my life, but not in the same way.

Not because something went wrong but because life happened.'

I had to go away to the hostel, and somewhere in between distance and time the bond slowly faded. We are still in touch, but it's not the same as it once was.

And that's when I first understood that sometimes, people don't leave...

life just takes them in different directions.

When I went to the hostel, everything changed.

The first day itself, when my parents left me there, I was introduced to a girl. I didn't know back then that she would become one of the first people I would call a friend in that new place.

I still remember, I broke her clip on the very first day. It was a beautiful one, and I ruined it. But she didn't say anything.

Maybe that's where it all started.

Slowly, we became friends.

As years passed, I met more people. In class 6, I made two more friends.

Then after COVID, I met others and eventually, we became six.

Six people, one group, countless memories.

From class 9 onwards, those were the best years of our friendship.

We were always together.

We laughed together.

We fought sometimes but we always chose to solve it.

There was no jealousy.

No competition.

Just pure, genuine friendship.

We were even chosen for captainship, all of us. And when we went to Siliguri for our captain orientation, those three days felt like a dream.

We enjoyed every moment.

But the most unforgettable time was during our class 10 coaching.

That phase wasn't just about studies, it was about us.

We were supposed to focus on our boards, but honestly, we were more focused on creating memories.

We ate a lot.

We laughed a lot.

We barely slept on time.

At night, we would tell our teachers we were studying—but in reality, we were just talking, sharing, living those moments fully.

Because somewhere deep down, we all knew that this was temporary.

We knew we would have to leave each other soon.

We even had a water boiler given by our principal. It was meant for hot water but we used it to cook Maggi.

Sneaking food, cooking together, eating together, it all felt like a small secret world of ours.

Even after all this, we still managed to score well in our boards.

And honestly, that just makes those memories even more special.

There was one moment I can never forget.

We were all jumping on my bed and I ended up breaking it. At first, I was scared. But nothing serious happened.

Maybe because it was our last year, things were taken lightly.

That's what made it even more beautiful.

On our last days, we even went boating together after our exams.

That day felt different.

Like we were trying to hold onto something that was already slipping away.

And then came the hardest part, *leaving*.

One by one, we all had to go.

When the first one left, we all broke down.

We hugged.

We cried.

Because we knew this wasn't just a "*see you tomorrow*."

This was goodbye.

We didn't end our friendship.

But we parted ways.

We made a group called "**Wakeup**." Only the six of us know what that really means. Even today, when I see that name, I smile.

We also had khadas with our lip imprints and little messages for each other.

I still have mine.

And sometimes, when I look at it, I don't just see a memory, I relive it.

And yes... sometimes I cry too.

Because I miss them.

When I came back home and joined a new school for class 11 and 12, everything felt different.

There was no hostel.

No constant company.

No "*us*."

I became a day scholar.

And honestly, it was hard.
I tried making friends.
I really did.
But the bonds didn't feel the same.
Maybe it was because I had already experienced something so real,
that everything else felt incomplete.
Or maybe it was just not meant to be.
The friendships I made there didn't last.
There were misunderstandings.
There were fights.
And most importantly, we didn't choose unity over ego.
And that made all the difference.
I won't call them fake.
But I will say this, not every friendship is meant to stay.
Some people are just there for a phase.
For a moment.
For a lesson.
Maybe I was judged for who I was.
Maybe I expected too much.
Maybe I tried too hard.
But today, when I look back, I don't regret anything.
Because those experiences taught me something important.
The difference between real bonds and temporary connections.
I still have one friend I'm in touch with.
And that's enough.

Because now I understand— it's not about having many people around you, it's about having the right ones.

Friendship is not about always staying together.

It's about the moments you shared, the memories you created and the impact people left on your life.

Some stayed.

Some didn't.

But all of them taught me something.

And maybe that's what friendship really is.

Not forever.

But meaningful, while it lasts.

People often talk about heartbreaks in a romantic way, as if losing someone you loved is the deepest pain a person can feel. But for me, losing a friend has always hurt more. Because friendships carry a different kind of comfort. A real friend becomes a part of your everyday life so naturally that you never even realize how attached you are until the distance appears. And when that bond changes, it leaves behind a silence that feels unfamiliar.

I think many of you reading this would understand what I mean.

Losing a friend is painful because they are the people who witness the rawest versions of us. The versions we do not always show to the world. They see our random laughter, our anger, our tears, our childish side, our overthinking, our insecurities, and somehow still choose to stay. That is why when friendships break, it does not just feel like losing a person. It feels like losing a part of your comfort too.

Right now, the world has become such a place where sometimes even our own shadow does not feel trustworthy. But despite that, there are still some people who enter our lives and prove that genuine friendships still exist. Some friends are so pure, so

understanding, and so trustworthy that no matter how difficult life becomes, we know we can count on them.

And honestly, that kind of friendship is rare.

I have also realized something very important over the years, there is a huge difference between real friends and convenient friends.

Convenient friends stay when life is entertaining for them. They stay when they need notes, attention, help, company, or someone to pass time with. But the moment life becomes difficult, the effort slowly disappears. Real friends are different. Real friends stay even during silence. They stay during misunderstandings, distance, breakdowns, and difficult phases of life.

For me personally, I do not believe in having a huge circle of friends anymore. I think one genuine friend is worth more than a hundred temporary people. A small circle with real loyalty feels far more peaceful than a crowd full of uncertainty.

And one thing I have learned is that friendship is not measured by how much you talk.

Nowadays people often say, “She texted me first.” “She sends me reels every day.” “We talk all night.”

But honestly, I do not think talking every single day defines a strong bond. Some friendships stay connected even without constant conversations. Some people disappear for weeks or months, and yet when you meet again, nothing feels different. The comfort remains the same. The understanding remains the same. And that kind of connection is beautiful because it is built on genuineness, not force.

Some bonds do not need daily conversations to survive. They simply survive because they are real.

And maybe that is why certain memories still feel so alive inside me. Sometimes a random photograph, an old conversation, a song, or even a simple laugh can suddenly take me back to moments I thought I had forgotten. Some memories with friends never truly

leave us. They stay quietly in our hearts, replaying themselves when we least expect it.

Now all of us have finished school life, and slowly everyone is stepping into different paths, different colleges, different futures. Life is changing again. And maybe that is why lately we have all been planning a reunion. Just one day where we all sit together again, laugh loudly, embarrass each other with old stories, relive memories, and forget for a moment how much time has passed.

And honestly, I hope it happens soon.

Because growing up teaches you something painful: you may meet many people in life, but the friendships that truly feel like home are never easy to replace.

“We may not be together anymore.....but we will never be strangers.”

Chapter Ten

The Climb Isn't Easy



Effort and Growth.

Two words that sound simple, but in reality, they carry the weight of everything we go through in life.

There is a very common saying, “*Kuch paane ke liye kuch khona padta hai.*”

To gain something, you have to lose something.

And honestly, life works exactly like that.

Nothing comes easy.

Nothing comes without a cost.

People often see success from the outside.

They see the result.

They see the achievement.

They see the final outcome.

But what they don't see is the effort behind it.

The sleepless nights.

The overthinking.

The sacrifices.

The moments where you felt like giving up but didn't.

In my own life, I have made sacrifices too.

Some were for the right things, and some... were not.

Let me start with the right ones.

When I was preparing for my class 10 boards, I remember how messed up my schedule was. I barely slept properly. Nights didn't feel like nights anymore, they felt like extensions of my worries and responsibilities.

There were days when I was exhausted, when my mind just wanted to rest but I kept going.

Not because I always felt motivated, but because I knew I had to.

And in the end, I did get a good percentage.

But if you ask me today, it wasn't just about the marks.

It was about proving to myself that I could stay consistent, even when it was hard.

Another sacrifice I made was staying in a hostel.

Choosing to live away from home at such a young age wasn't easy.

I had to learn everything on my own.

How to manage myself.

How to handle situations.

How to grow without depending too much on anyone.

Even though I was surrounded by friends, there were still moments where I had to face things alone.

And maybe that's where real growth begins, when you start handling life on your own.

But not all sacrifices are worth it.

And this is something I learned the hard way.

There were times when I gave my time, my energy, my emotions to the wrong people.

I trusted where I shouldn't have.

I stayed where I should have left.

I invested in things that were never meant to stay.

And those sacrifices didn't give me growth at that moment, they gave me pain.

But even that pain taught me something.

It taught me where not to invest myself again.

It taught me the difference between what deserves my effort and what doesn't.

Because not everything you loose is a loss.

Sometimes, losing the wrong things is what makes space for the right ones.

One thing I have realized is that effort is not always visible.

Sometimes you give your 100% and still don't get the result you expected.

And that hurts.

It makes you question yourself.

It makes you wonder if all that effort was even worth it.

But the truth is.....

Effort is never wasted.

Even when it doesn't show in results, it shows in who you become.

People often talk about motivation.

"Stay motivated."

"Keep yourself motivated."

But honestly, motivation doesn't stay.

It comes and goes.

There were days when I didn't feel like studying.

Days when I didn't feel like trying.

Days when I just wanted to stop.

But what kept me going was not motivation.

It was discipline.

It was consistency.

It was showing up even when I didn't feel like it.

And that's what actually builds you.

Not the days when you feel strong but the days when you feel weak and still continue.

Growth is also a very lonely process.

No one really sees it happening.

No one claps when you are trying.

No one notices the small changes you are making.

It's just you, working on yourself quietly.

Trying. Failing. Trying again.

And that's what makes it real.

We often think growth is about big achievements.

But sometimes, growth is in the smallest things.

Waking up on time.

Controlling your emotions.

Choosing silence over unnecessary arguments.

Not giving up when things get hard.

These are also efforts.

And these are the ones that truly shape you.

There is also a difference between where you put your effort.

Effort in relationships and effort in yourself.

When it comes to relationships, effort should never be one-sided.

If you are the only one trying,

the only one understanding,

the only one adjusting, then maybe it's not effort anymore,

it's exhaustion.

But when it comes to yourself, effort should never stop.

No matter who leaves.

No matter what happens.

No matter how hard it gets.

Because at the end of the day, you are the one who has to live your life.

Another thing I strongly believe is you cannot copy someone else's life.

You can copy their habits, their style, their way of doing things.

But you cannot copy their journey.

Because your experiences are different.

Your struggles are different.

Your path is different.

And that's what makes your life yours.
To truly understand life,
you have to go through it yourself.
You have to experience it.
You have to feel it.
You have to live it.
Only then will you understand what your life really means.
Growth doesn't happen overnight.
It takes time.
It takes patience.
It takes courage.
And most importantly, it takes effort.
There will be times when you feel like nothing is working.
When everything feels slow.
When you feel stuck.
But that doesn't mean you are not growing.
Sometimes, growth is silent.
Sometimes, it's happening in ways you don't even realize.
So keep putting effort.
In your dreams.
In your goals.
In yourself.
Even if no one sees it.
Even if no one appreciates it.
Because one day it will all make sense.

And maybe that is another truth about growth: we only notice our struggles so closely that we forget someone else is praying for the life we already have.

There is a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. that says,

**“If you can’t fly, then run.
If you can’t run, then walk.
If you can’t walk, then crawl.
But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”**

And honestly, I think this is one of the realest things ever said about life.

Because growth is not always fast. Success is not always loud. And effort is not always visible.

Sometimes you are flying through life confidently. Sometimes you are running towards your goals. Sometimes you are only walking slowly because life feels heavy. And sometimes you are barely crawling through your worst days.

But even crawling is still progress.

I think many of us forget this because we live in a generation where everyone wants quick results. We want success instantly. We want healing instantly. We want happiness instantly. And when things take time, we start doubting ourselves.

But life was never meant to be a race.

Your journey will not look like someone else’s journey, and that is completely okay.

There will be phases where you move slowly. There will be phases where you feel tired, unmotivated, emotionally drained, or mentally exhausted. But just because your progress is slow does not mean your progress is invalid.

Sometimes surviving itself is an achievement.

And another thing I have realized is that human beings complain a lot without realizing how blessed they already are.

We complain that we do not have enough clothes, while somewhere someone is struggling to cover themselves properly.

We complain about food, while somewhere someone sleeps hungry every night.

We complain that we are tired of walking, while somewhere someone wishes they could walk properly again.

We complain about writing assignments, while somewhere someone does not even have hands to write with.

We complain about not liking how we look, while somewhere someone is fighting battles far greater than appearance.

We complain about small inconveniences, while somewhere someone is praying just to survive another day.

And maybe this is the side of life we often ignore.

We become so focused on what we lack that we forget to appreciate what we already have.

There are people in this world who cannot see the beauty of nature. People who cannot hear the voices of their loved ones. People who cannot speak their feelings out loud. People who are born with struggles they never chose.

And yet many of them continue living with more strength than people who have everything.

That is why I believe gratitude is also a form of growth.

Because real growth is not only about achieving more. Sometimes it is also about learning to appreciate more.

And no, this does not mean your struggles are invalid.

Your pain matters. Your exhaustion matters. Your problems matter too.

But sometimes we need to pause for a moment and realize that life could have been much harder than it already is.

I also strongly feel that we should never make fun of people for things they cannot control.

Not everyone is fighting visible battles.

Some people are surviving illnesses. Some are surviving disabilities. Some are surviving loneliness. Some are surviving emotionally every single day without telling anyone.

And still they continue moving forward.

That itself is courage.

I think growth teaches us humanity too. It teaches us empathy. It teaches us kindness. It teaches us to become softer towards people because we never truly know what someone is carrying inside them.

And maybe the climb is not only about becoming successful.

Maybe the climb is also about becoming a better human being while reaching the top.

Because what is the point of success if you lose your humanity on the way there?

Life will always have struggles. There will always be pressure. There will always be moments where you feel behind.

But as long as you are trying, as long as you are moving, as long as you are not giving up completely, you are still growing.

Even slow progress is progress.

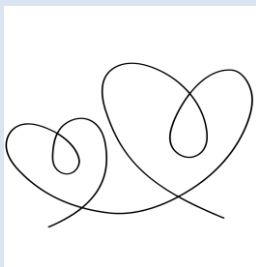
Even small effort matters.

And even the smallest step forward can someday change your entire life.

*“The climb is never easy but neither is becoming
the person you are meant to be”*

Chapter Eleven

Where Feelings Had No Name



There are some things in life you don't plan to write about.

They just come out of you.

Not because you want to explain them, but because you never got the chance to say them out loud.

This chapter is not a story.

It's a collection of feelings.

Of moments I lived, questions I carried, and emotions I had no place for

except my diary.

Art of Letting Go — Part 1

Letting someone go from your life is not so easy.

The person you once thought was your everything... slowly becomes nothing.

Someone you once called your soulmate

turns into something you wish never happened.

Many people come into your life, but some feel irreplaceable.

And that's the hardest part.

You don't want to replace them.

You don't want to go back either.

You just stay there... stuck.

They say time heals everything.

But sometimes, the more time passes, the more it hurts.

Art of Letting Go — Part 2

Battling this phase alone feels... different.

You feel withdrawn. Lost.

People say, "It's easy, just move on."

But the real question is, if it was so easy, why did it feel so real?

Why did it feel like love?

Many people look fine from the outside.

But inside, they are completely broken.

Because some things don't fade in seconds.

Some memories don't leave when you ask them to.

If it wasn't meant to last, then why was it so beautiful?

No one really has that answer.
Making memories is easy.
But remembering them alone... hits different.

Art of Letting Go — Part 3

Seconds turn into minutes.
Minutes into hours.
Hours into days.
Days into weeks.
Weeks into months...
And slowly, everything starts fading.
But not completely.
Regrets stay.
Memories stay longer.
You learn to face reality.
To accept that what once belonged to you now belongs somewhere else.
And that hurts in a way words can't explain.
The same thing you once wanted so badly... you don't want anymore.
Not because you don't care, but because you finally understand.
You fall again and again, until one day, you choose to stop.
You learn to be okay with little things.
Because now you know, you never deserved something that made you question your worth.
But even after everything... there's still one question left,,

Did I really let it go?

The Fear of Asking “*What Are We?*”

It's not just one girl.

Many girls go through this.

Talking every day.

Sharing everything.

Laughing, caring, being there.

But deep inside...

not knowing what it really is.

Is it real?

Or just something that exists only in your heart?

The hardest part is—

he never clearly says it.

He doesn't define it.

He doesn't clarify it.

So you stay.

Not committed.

Not free.

Just somewhere in between.

Waiting.

Girls feel deeply.

They don't plan to get attached.

It just happens.

They start caring.

They start hoping.

They start imagining something more.
And once they feel... they feel fully.
But with that comes fear.
The fear of asking,
"What are we?"
Because what if the answer breaks everything?
What if she means more to him in her heart
than she ever did in his?
What if one question changes everything?
Sometimes, she has already been hurt before.
Sometimes, she carries pain no one sees.
And the thought of losing him... feels worse than staying silent.
So she chooses silence.
But silence is heavy.
It fills her mind with questions.
Is he here because he truly cares?
Or just for attention?
Convenience?
Or something temporary?
Does he value her for who she is...
or just for what she gives?
These questions don't leave easily.
And maybe all she ever wanted was clarity.
Because asking is not pressure.
It's not drama.

It's not insecurity.

It's a need.

A need for emotional safety.

A girl doesn't ask "*What are we?*" to trap someone.

She asks because she has already given her heart.

It takes courage to ask that question.

It takes strength to risk hearing an answer that might hurt.

But she deserves to know.

Because if something is real, it will never be afraid of a question.

And if it disappears after one honest conversation...

Maybe it was never strong enough to stay.

I didn't know where it started.

I Let Go of the "*Maybe*"

Because it never really felt like a beginning.

It just... happened.

We got close.

I didn't question it.

I trusted it.

Even when things felt off,

I stayed.

Holding onto a maybe.

Maybe you would change.

Maybe things would get better.

Maybe we would become something real.

But maybe... was all it ever was.

Finding out things later, hearing things I wish I never knew it didn't just hurt.

It broke something in me.

Not because of what you did, but because I kept believing you wouldn't.

I wasn't waiting for you.

I was waiting for something good.

But hope... became exhausting.

So I stopped.

Stopped going back.

Stopped trying to understand.

Stopped holding onto what ifs.

I let go of the maybe.

Of you coming back.

Of things changing.

Of us becoming something.

I'm done hoping for something that was never meant to stay.

Done choosing you when you never chose me.

And now...

You don't mean anything anymore.

So Was It All a Lie?

It started simply.

Just talking.

Nothing serious.

I didn't even love you then.

Just a small liking.

But you said you fell first.
And I, like I always do, feel deeper than I should have.
We talked.
We stopped.
We came back.
We left again.
Still, I stayed.
Still, I felt.
One day, I asked you, "What are we?"
You didn't answer.
You just said,
"You'll get to know."
But how long does it take
to understand something real?
You told me I was the first person you loved
after your past.
And I believed you.
I blamed myself.
Maybe I cared too much.
Maybe I loved too loudly.
You came back when I looked happy.
But where were you when I was breaking silently?
Did you ever really see me?
Or just the version of me that was easy to like?
I'm tired now.

Tired of questions.

Tired of guessing.

Tired of holding onto someone
who never held me the same way.

If I was wrong, I'll grow.

If I was hurt, I'll heal.

But one question will always remain,,

What were we... and was it ever real?

“Not every almost deserves a forever”

Chapter Twelve

In Every Phase, I Lost And Found Myself



Life is strange. Sometimes it feels beautiful beyond words, and sometimes it feels unbearably heavy. One day you are laughing freely without worrying about tomorrow, and the next day you are lying awake at night wondering how everything changed so quickly. Life moves silently. It changes people silently. And before we even realize it, we become completely different versions of ourselves.

Every phase of life introduces us to someone new, not always a new person, but a new version of ourselves.

Some phases teach us happiness.

Some teach us pain.

Some teach us love.

And some teach us how to survive alone.

When I look back now, I realize that life was never only about reaching somewhere. It was always about growing through every stage, every heartbreak, every memory, every loss, every small happiness, and every lesson hidden inside those moments.

When I was a kid, I was innocent like every other child around me. I had zero concept of the world, what it was like, where it would take me, or how far it would take me. I was completely clueless about everything. Back then, every small thing made me happy, be it getting chocolates, coloured pencils, new dresses, toys, or even simple appreciation from elders. Life felt easy. It felt light. I laughed wholeheartedly without thinking too much about anything.

There were no attachment issues.

No overthinking.

No fear of losing people.

No fear of being misunderstood.

Back then, I never knew people could fake emotions so easily. I never knew people could pretend to care while slowly drifting away. I never knew that people could promise forever and still leave one day without explanation.

The younger version of me thought life would always stay the same.

I genuinely believed that people stayed forever. I believed friendships would never fade. I believed good hearts always received good things in return. I believed growing up would be exciting.

But growing up was not only beautiful.

It was confusing too.

Childhood is probably the *purest phase of life* because we do not know how cruel the world can become sometimes. We trust people easily. We forgive easily. We love easily. We cry for five minutes

and smile again. Even our problems were small and temporary. We had no pressure to prove ourselves to anyone. We lived freely.

Sometimes I wish I could go back to that version of myself. Not because life right now is completely bad, but because that little version of me carried so much innocence inside her heart.

Then life slowly began changing.

As I grew older, I slowly started understanding people, emotions, situations, expectations, disappointments, and reality itself. I realized the world was not as soft as I once thought it was. People were changing. Situations were changing. Even I was changing.

Then came the phase of life where I slowly stopped being a child but did not fully know how to become an adult either.

And that phase is called **teenage**.

Teenage years are one of the *most confusing phases of life*. You are emotionally sensitive yet expected to act mature. You want to be understood, yet you struggle to explain yourself. You want people to stay, yet life slowly teaches you that not everyone will.

This was the phase where I encountered emotional changes, friendship issues, attachment issues, overthinking, self-doubt, expectations, disappointments, loneliness, and silent battles nobody really noticed.

Sometimes I could do nothing but sit quietly and think.

And keep thinking.

I feel teenage is the phase where life teaches us the hardest lessons in the shortest time possible.

You slowly start noticing how people change their behaviour according to situations. You realize not everyone supports you genuinely. Some people only stay when things are convenient for them.

Some people only understand your happiness but not your sadness.

And honestly, that realization hurts.

There were moments where I questioned myself too much. I questioned my worth, my efforts, my place in people's lives, and even my own importance. Sometimes I wondered if I was too emotional. Sometimes I wondered if caring deeply was my biggest weakness.

But now I realize something.

Being soft-hearted is not a weakness.

In a generation where people normalize pretending not to care, having genuine emotions is actually rare.

One thing life taught me is that people these days are scared of honesty. People hide feelings behind jokes, behind dry replies, behind silence, and behind fake "*I'm okay*." Everyone wants to be understood, but very few people truly try understanding others.

And maybe that is why this generation feels so lonely despite being constantly connected online.

We talk to many people but still feel unheard.

We post smiling pictures while silently struggling inside.

We laugh loudly outside and overthink quietly at night.

This phase of life also taught me about losing people.

Some friendships faded slowly.

Some bonds changed completely.

Some people became strangers again.

And the saddest part is that sometimes there is no huge reason behind it. Life just happens. Priorities change. Distance changes people. Time changes people. Situations change people.

People changed. Priorities changed. Even I changed.

At first, I blamed myself for every ending. I thought maybe I cared too much. Maybe I expected too much. Maybe I became too

attached. But growing up made me realize that not every person is meant to stay forever.

Some people are lessons disguised as memories.

Growth sometimes means outgrowing people too.

That truth was painful for me because younger me believed every friendship would last forever. I believed every bond could be saved if enough effort was put into it. But no matter how deeply you care, you cannot force people to stay.

And forcing yourself to stay where you are no longer valued slowly destroys you from within.

One of the hardest phases for me was **loneliness**.

Especially after returning home from hostel life.

Back in the hostel, I was always surrounded by people. There was always laughter, noise, conversations, arguments, celebrations, late-night talks, and memories being created every single day. Even when life was difficult there, I never truly felt alone because people were always around me.

But when I returned home, everything became quiet.

Too quiet.

Suddenly there were no hostel friends around me every day. No random conversations. No chaos. No group laughter. No one sitting beside me during difficult moments. And that silence affected me deeply.

Loneliness does not always mean having nobody around.

Sometimes loneliness means feeling emotionally disconnected from the world around you.

That phase taught me how to sit alone with my thoughts. It taught me how to become independent emotionally. It taught me how to survive difficult moments without expecting people to always save me.

Slowly, my diary became my safest place.

My notebook listened to every emotion I could not explain to others. My pen became the voice of feelings I buried inside myself. Writing became my escape. It became the one place where I could be completely honest without fear of judgment.

And honestly, writing healed me in ways people never could.

There were phases where I felt completely broken too.

Phases where I doubted myself.

Phases where I felt emotionally exhausted.

Phases where I wanted people to understand me but could not explain what I was feeling myself.

But every difficult phase taught me something important.

Some phases broke me.

Some phases healed me.

Some phases taught me patience.

Some phases taught me self-respect.

Some phases taught me how strong I actually am.

And every single phase changed me.

The version of me from two years ago would not recognize me now.

I have changed mentally, emotionally, and personally. Earlier I used to chase people. Now I chase peace. Earlier I used to over-explain myself. Now I understand that people who truly care will understand without too many explanations.

Healing changed me too.

Healing is not quick. It is not aesthetic like people show online. Healing is messy. Some days you feel strong, and some days old memories suddenly hit you again. Some days you miss people you promised yourself you had moved on from. Some days you feel

completely okay, and some days you suddenly break down over things you thought you healed from already.

But healing is still progress.

Even the smallest progress matters.

One thing I have realized is that life never waits for us to fully recover before giving us another challenge. And maybe that is why we must learn how to keep moving even when life feels difficult.

Life is not about perfection.

It is about learning.

Growing.

Falling.

Healing.

And becoming stronger through every experience.

Sometimes we become so focused on painful phases that we forget how far we have already come. We forget the younger version of ourselves who once cried over things we now survived.

And honestly, I am proud of every version of myself.

The innocent child.

The confused teenager.

The emotionally sensitive girl.

The lonely version.

The healing version.

And the stronger version slowly growing through every phase.

Every phase of life introduced me to a different version of myself.

Some versions were soft.

Some were broken.

Some were healing.

Some were learning to let go.

And some were finally learning how to choose themselves.

Not every phase is beautiful while you are living it. Some phases feel endless. Some feel painful. Some mentally exhaust you. But later, when you look back, you realize those difficult moments shaped you into the person you are becoming today.

Nothing in life stays permanent.

Not happiness.

Not pain.

Not people.

Not phases.

And maybe that is what teaches us the most.

Because if pain stayed forever, nobody would survive.

And if happiness stayed forever, nobody would learn the value of it either.

Life keeps changing us until one day we finally meet the real version of ourselves.

And maybe that is the true meaning of growing up.

“Some phases were painful, some beautiful but all of them became a part of me”

Chapter Thirteen

The Art of Being There for Yourself



Being **alone** and feeling **lonely** are two completely different things. Many people misunderstand these two words and use them as if they mean the same thing, but they don't. Being alone simply means not having people around you physically. It means sitting by yourself, spending time with yourself, learning how to exist with your own presence. But feeling lonely is much deeper than that. Feeling lonely means feeling empty even when surrounded by people. It means sitting in a room full of people and still feeling like nobody truly understands you. It means laughing with everyone else but silently feeling disconnected inside.

And honestly, this generation feels lonely more than alone.

We live in a world where everyone is connected through phones, social media, chats, calls, streaks, notes, reels, and posts, yet somehow people still feel emotionally distant from each other.

People know your favorite song, your favorite color, your birthday, your pictures, your smile, your posts, but very few actually know how your mind works when you are breaking silently at 2 a.m.

That is loneliness.

Being alone never scared me that much. What scared me more was feeling unseen around people I trusted the most. Sometimes people leave. Sometimes they change. Sometimes they stop understanding you. And sometimes they simply outgrow the bond they once promised to protect forever. That is life. No matter how badly we want certain people to stay, not everyone is meant to walk with us till the very end.

One thing we all must understand is that we are born alone and one day, we will leave this world alone too. People may love you deeply, care for you endlessly, stay beside you during your hardest moments, but no human being can live your life for you. At the end of the day, it is your mind, your heart, your decisions, your healing, your battles, your peace, and your responsibility to take care of yourself.

That is why learning how to be there for yourself is one of the most important things in life.

And no, being there for yourself does not mean isolating yourself from the world. It does not mean avoiding people, avoiding friendships, avoiding love, or avoiding happiness. It simply means learning how to comfort yourself even when nobody else knows what is going on inside your mind.

Nowadays, one thing I have noticed in our generation is how quickly we reach for our phones the moment we wake up. The first thing people do in the morning is check notifications, messages, likes, reposts, and social media updates. We wake up and immediately allow the noise of the world to enter our minds before even spending one peaceful moment with ourselves.

But sometimes, the best thing you can do for yourself is slow down.

Wake up early. Drink water. Sit quietly for a few minutes. Close your eyes. Breathe. Thank God for another day. Thank yourself too. Appreciate yourself for surviving days nobody knows about. Talk to yourself. Not in a strange way, but in a healing way. Ask yourself how you truly feel. Ask yourself whether you are happy, tired, confused, hurt, or healing. Because if you do not understand yourself, how will you expect the world to?

People often say, “*You don't even know yourself.*” And honestly, there was a time when I felt that too. There was a time when I searched for understanding in everyone else while completely ignoring myself. But slowly I realized that self-connection is built quietly. It is built in silence. It is built during lonely nights, deep thoughts, journaling sessions, silent prayers, morning reflections, and moments where nobody is there except you and your thoughts.

That is where you slowly begin meeting yourself.

If you are someone who struggles to express your feelings, start writing. Keeping a diary is honestly one of the most comforting habits a person can build. A diary never interrupts you. It never judges you. It never leaves you halfway through your emotions. It simply listens. Sometimes paper understands feelings better than people do.

Even today, I still believe writing heals people in ways conversations sometimes cannot.

Whenever life disappoints you, whenever someone breaks your trust, whenever heartbreaks happen, never keep blaming yourself repeatedly. One of the saddest things people do is punish themselves for the actions of others. While you sit there overthinking, blaming yourself, questioning your worth, the people who hurt you may already be moving on peacefully with their lives.

Do not destroy yourself trying to understand why someone failed to value you.

Instead, learn how to console yourself too. Learn how to sit with your pain without letting it destroy you. Learn how to become

emotionally independent. Because not every time will someone come and save you from your sadness. Sometimes your own words, your own strength, your own mindset, and your own patience will be the only things helping you survive difficult phases.

And trust me, that strength matters.

There will also be moments in life where silence becomes necessary. Not every argument deserves your reaction. Not every misunderstanding deserves endless explanations. Sometimes staying silent protects your peace more than proving your point ever will. People may misunderstand your silence as attitude or ego, but silence often speaks the loudest when words are no longer useful.

Silence teaches things people never can.

Silence teaches patience.

Silence teaches observation.

Silence teaches emotional control.

Silence teaches healing.

And most importantly, ***silence teaches self-respect.***

One thing people fail to protect these days is their energy. They give their energy to temporary people, temporary situations, unnecessary drama, meaningless arguments, and people who do not even value their presence. Not everyone deserves access to your peace. Protect your energy carefully. The more peaceful your mind becomes, the more clearly you begin understanding life.

You also do not need constant validation from people to feel worthy. Not everybody will clap for you. Not everybody will understand your growth. Not everybody will support your choices. And honestly, that is okay. You were not born to spend your entire life trying to make everyone approve of you.

Sometimes the strongest thing a person can do is quietly continue improving themselves without announcing everything to the world.

Learn how to become your own comfort person. Learn how to calm yourself down during difficult nights. Learn how to encourage

yourself during failures. Learn how to forgive yourself for mistakes. Learn how to speak kindly to yourself because the relationship you have with yourself will follow you your entire life.

At the end of everything, people may come and go, phases may change, bonds may break, and life may become unpredictable, but one person will always remain with you through every version of your life— **yourself**.

And maybe that is why being alone is not always a bad thing.

Sometimes, being alone is where healing begins.

After some point in life, I slowly started understanding the difference between escaping loneliness and actually enjoying solitude.

There is a huge difference between the two.

Escaping loneliness means constantly needing distractions because you are uncomfortable with yourself. You keep searching for noise, people, attention, messages, or validation just to avoid sitting alone with your own thoughts. But enjoying solitude is peaceful. It is when your own company no longer feels heavy. It is when sitting alone does not make you feel empty anymore.

And honestly, true healing begins there.

The moment you stop running away from yourself is the moment you slowly start reconnecting with who you really are.

That is why I feel people should spend more time understanding themselves instead of constantly depending on others emotionally. Because the truth is, not everyone will understand your pain the way you expect them to. Some people may listen to you, some may comfort you for some time, but at the end of the day, it is still you who has to face your own mind.

And I am not saying this randomly. I am saying this from what I personally felt.

Sometimes we expect too much from people. We expect them to stay the same forever. We expect them to understand us without explaining. We expect them to care the same way we care. But expectations silently hurt us the most.

That is why life slowly teaches you to **stop expecting and start accepting.**

Accept that people change, accept that not everyone thinks emotionally like you, accept that some people will disappoint you, accept that not everybody will value your heart properly.

And that is okay.

Because if someone failed to value you, that does not mean your worth decreased. Your value is not connected to attention, replies, friendships, relationships, or validation. Nowadays many teenagers connect their self-worth with how much attention they receive from others, but that is one of the most emotionally exhausting things a person can do.

Your worth already exists even when nobody notices it.

One thing I also realized is that peace is much more important than attention.

Attention may feel exciting for a moment, but peace feels safe for a lifetime.

Nowadays everything has become public. Every emotion gets posted online. Every heartbreak becomes content. Every fight becomes a status. Every painful moment becomes something people announce to the world. **But personally, I feel not every battle needs an audience.**

Some things should stay private.

Some healing happens better in silence.

I think one of the strongest things a person can do is heal quietly without explaining everything to everyone. People nowadays are so

used to publicizing every moment of their life that they forget how important privacy actually is. Even celebrities and influencers sometimes do not get to live peacefully because everything around them becomes public.

And honestly, I would never want a life where I cannot even heal privately.

Not everybody deserves access to your emotions.

Sometimes the best thing you can do for yourself is sit quietly and reconnect with yourself again. Everyone heals differently. Some people heal through journaling. Some through books. Some through prayers. Some through taking walks alone. Some through reconnecting with hobbies.

And for me, music became one of the biggest comforts during emotionally exhausting days.

Whenever my mind feels too heavy, I listen to peaceful music. Sometimes rain sounds, nature sounds, soft instrumentals, birds chirping — small peaceful things like that calm my mind. Sometimes I journal too. Writing things down helps me understand my emotions better. Those quiet moments slowly help me reconnect with myself again.

And I think every person should find something that helps them reconnect with themselves emotionally.

Because becoming emotionally independent is important.

Not cold-hearted. Not emotionless. Just emotionally stable enough to not completely break every time life disappoints you.

Learn how to comfort yourself too. Learn how to calm your own mind. Learn how to survive difficult phases without depending completely on others.

Because life will not always give you people who stay forever.

And that is why sometimes you need to become your own safe place.

Life gives second chances. So restart.

Restart again and again if needed.

There is nothing embarrassing about rebuilding yourself. Healing is not always loud. Sometimes the biggest battles are fought silently inside a person's mind.

And maybe becoming your own comfort person is one of the most beautiful forms of healing a person can experience.

“Alas, You need You”