

Things just happened because they needed to happen, even if I didn't understand why. Somehow, I ended up taking AP classes in high school and was surrounded with influential students aspiring to attend prestigious colleges. I knew that I had to do the same. No one ever talked to me about it. I didn't know what an SAT was, but I took it anyways because somehow it would give me a fighting chance into a university. My parents were too busy with the nine-year aftershock of their divorce to guide me in any shape or form. My counselor never met with me to check on my application progress either. I was walking in fog not knowing what direction to go in. Even so I knew that if I wanted my life to be better than how it had been, it was important to push through and figure things out on my own.

I was accepted to CSU San Jose, CSU San Francisco, CSU Monterey Bay and CSU Chico. I'm not sure why I didn't apply to UC's. Debt scared me. Regardless, it was probably the biggest accomplishment in my life. The next step was also stressful. I had to constantly pull myself by the hairs, out of my comfort zone, to ask important questions I needed answered. What classes do I need to enroll in? Who is my counselor? What happens if I can't afford a \$100-dollar deposit to live on campus? Thankfully, once I committed to CSU Monterey Bay, I was reached out to by Omar Murillo from TRiO, which aids first generation, low-income students, like myself. He set me on a much simpler path to success and insured me that he would help me stay and graduation.

Like Omar had assured me, it felt like a constant struggle. Adapting to this new lifestyle and learning to live on my own was extremely difficult with the small budget that I had. Later on this led me to apply for a part time job and it allowed me to gain my first experience earning my own money. Balancing school, work, family and commuting by bus in between gave me a busy life. My grades faltered from depression but I managed to bring my GPA back up to a 3.2 and I knew that I was doing something right even though I didn't know how.

I know that with all that I've been through I have great potential. I have proven it to both my parents and to myself. On my own I paved my own path to success and have successfully reached a higher education. My next challenge is soon to come once I graduate from college and obtain my bachelor's degree in world languages and cultures. I must now decide what career path to take in order to gain more experience or to jump directly into the stable job that I have been determined to acquire through my education. I know why things happen now, and it feels great to be in control.