

The Tightrope Between Reality and Dreams & Where I Stand

“Congratulations! It is with great pleasure that I offer you admission to the Stanford University Class of 2022,” Those are the words that dreams haven’t even allowed me to glimpse. Perhaps, it is to let me know that I mustn’t settle for dreams when reality is so much more fulfilling. If a day comes when the honor of becoming part of the Stanford community is bestowed on me, words would pale in comparison to my emotions. A dream college’s acceptance letter is like a breath of fresh air after being underwater for so long, going back to sleep after snoozing the alarm, popping bubble wraps, drawing a perfectly straight line, being able to squeeze out the remainder at the bottom of a toothpaste tube, sunny summer days with the right amount of breeze, or opening up to the smell of new pages in a book. Even so, scenarios would still fail to emphasize the ecstatic feeling that fills every vein of my being. If I truly had to sum up my ideal reaction, it'd be a blended mix of feeling optimistic, symbolic, and anxious.

Optimism is a star that can not be dimmed when it demands to be bright. Undoubtedly, I would be optimistic if I get a dream college acceptance and especially since my hard work earned me it, I shouldn't waste the opportunity. If anything, knowing my efforts through high school didn't die in vain allows me to become more confident and appreciative enough to strive for better achievements and goals in college. At a dream college, I would have an overabundance of things to attempt, people to acquaint, and places to venture. The thought that a day like this can come is surely comforting. I'll be able to surround myself with dreamers and doers that share the same aspirations and passions as myself and it will be at the same place where we both considered as our dream colleges. There are so many more dreams that branch off the dream of getting into an ideal college. Would I pursue medicine, business, engineering, literature, arts,

music, or history? The endless options are something worthy in looking forward to and in the process, discover who I am and who I'm meant to be. When that day comes, I will have unconditional love for the person who I've become, because I would know that I fought strenuously to become her. The efforts that I put in today will determine the height at where I stand in the future and where I stand will ultimately determines the scenery I see. Even if my efforts don't reach its full destination, no matter what the result is, it will surely be different from the result of not putting in effort, and essentially, the significance of it all is to see a better self. Therefore, it's logical to feel optimistic as it is to think only the best, to work only toward the best, and to expect only the best, and being at a college that I have always dreamed of is a good place to start as any.

Becoming a symbol of perseverance, resilience, and exuberance to others would be an inconceivable privilege presented upon anyone. Especially for a dream college like Stanford, which everyone knows is synonymous to "good-luck-being-the-4.8%-accepted" and "what-were-you-thinking," to be qualified into such an elite community would make a statement toward those that are currently in my footsteps and derive a spark of hope from it. Being a first college student as an Asian-American woman from an immigrant family of two working class parents, I resonate with a lot of people who may experience the same struggles and hesitations. We seek guidance and inspiration from those alike us that have achieved grand dreams; frankly not necessarily because we want to be a replica, but because it's reassuring to be reminded it's possible. Much like so, I want to be seen as someone awe inspiring and unstoppable, and not because I lacked pain, failures, and doubts, but because I continued on despite the presence of them. If there's anything I've learned is that people will follow examples, not advice. Therefore,

being accepted into a prestigious dream college would be the proof that fills in the gaps where my words couldn't and determines the "me" that I will showcase. Along with it comes a sense of duty to be a role model symbolizing the notion of not giving up, and in order to tell others to not give up, I must not give up on myself, first.

Whatever makes your heart races are things worth doing even more. Regardless, getting admitted into a dream college will inevitably makes you overwhelmed, especially with the given thoughts of the next four years or so there. Will I pick the right major? Will I regret the path I choose? What if I'm too inadequate and undeserving compared to everyone else there? It's not whether or not anxiety drips from my chest, but it relies on my ability to unceasingly strive further to seal that leak; that's when weakness becomes strength. It's important, in a way, that anxiousness is felt if I get accepted because it expresses humbleness, but it's more important that I don't let the feeling own me. Worry allows small things to walk with a big shadow, which shows that although I fear of an aftermath after getting an acceptance, it is not impossible to overcome those future hurdles at my dream college. Those feelings are just moments that will pass. If I can overcome applying into my dream college, then I can work my way through other hassles. However, at the end of the day, feeling anxious is still a universal instinct that many would feel if they get into a dream college.

The word "dream" is a strange thing to say. One starts with a dream but must fulfill everything in reality. To an extent, a dream is actually what a person's heart looks like. To go forward and take that leap of faith in applying and getting accepted to a dream college is letting everyone see what my heart looks like, to see my dreams. Long ago, a question was posed for me to describe the color of my life if I got accepted into a dream college. I thought about it quite a

lot. Would it be red for the fire ignited in my heart longing for this very moment? Would it be blue like the calm ocean tides signifying relief for even progressing beyond that obstruction? Or would it be yellow like the radiant sun on a mid July day trickling warmth and brightness as a finishing touch to my accomplishment and future? In the end, I realized there was no answer to that question. It would be colorless because I don't know what the color of hard work is. I could write novels for what I would feel with an acceptance letter in my hand, but as a teaser: optimistic, symbolic, and anxious.