

Hayden Quinn

The greatest moments in life come unexpected. If someone told me one year ago that I would be Miss Grand Blanc, I would have probably laughed it off in disbelief. I've wanted to compete in the Miss Grand Blanc Scholarship pageant for a long time, but I knew that it was something completely out of my comfort zone, and I didn't think that I would get very far in the competition.

I didn't want to compete in this pageant for popularity or to compete for prettiness - that's not what it was about. I wanted to take the opportunity to prove myself as a loving, caring person. I'm passionate about making people happy, and I knew that this could happen with community work if I was crowned. But a lot would go into the process before I could dream about my potential success story.

I had prepared for interview questions for months ahead of time, convinced myself that my outfits were perfect, and fully committed to the process of a scholarship pageant - yet in my head, I was a complete wreck. It's like that feeling you get when you study days prior to a test and feel prepared, but as soon as you get the test you completely forget what you're doing.

Dancing for the past twelve years has made being on stage in front of many people a piece of cake. But this was different. While throughout the pageant you are supposed to show your personality and poise, like in dance, I had never spoken in front of that many people before. There was no telling if I would be calm and answer the questions nicely or choke and word-vomit, especially during the dreaded final question. Public speaking just wasn't my thing. One time at a competition, I won for my solo and when asked to say something to my choreographer, I made the whole audience think that I was a narcissist.

I felt sick to my stomach, and my anxiety levels were through the roof. Pacing backstage, "I don't know how to speak well", "I won't be successful", "I can't do this", "I still don't look good in this dress" swarmed through my mind. I couldn't take it anymore. How was I supposed to deal with this self doubt?

Deep breaths.



All of the sudden, what felt like forever turned into what felt like five minutes. It was time to crown the winners. All of the contestants were on stage holding sweaty hands, smiling for the audience. The second runner up and the first runner up, Emily Walter and Avery Conners were called and crowned. I was so proud of them. Then, out of the blue, "And your 2019 Miss Grand Blanc is," said the announcer as the audience went quiet, "Hayden Quinn!"

White and gold lights started sprinkling in my eyes. I didn't know how to feel, or how to act. Do I smile and stay poised like I was supposed to, or break down and cry happy tears like I wanted to? I tried doing both.

In a rush of events, appearances, and humbling experiences, my summer was almost over. I enjoyed putting on my crown and pretty dresses, but that didn't really matter. What mattered was looking into the faces of little girls and boys and seeing them in awe. I was their princess.

