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Why am I here? Seriously, like why am I even alive? As a 16-year-old high school student, I ask myself that question a lot. Some mornings I wake up at 6 am and question if it's even worth getting out of bed.

I don't mean to throw my depression at you, but that's the truth. From the stress of homework, teachers, friends, after school jobs, family, and so much more, I'm just so tired all the time. It's like I'm a toddler who is trying to figure out this big world, but really, just needs a nap.

It's a struggle I've been dealing with for as long as I can remember, but it has gotten significantly worse since I started high school.

Freshman year I took all honors or pre-AP classes and aimed for a 4.0. My plate was overflowing with homework, there was no time for anything else. I quit all sports and stopped hanging out with friends during the week and most weekends. My mental health plummeted to an all-time low, I was the farthest thing from happy.

Around the time spring came that year, I broke. I gave up on school almost completely. When I got home from school each day, I played on my phone, watched TV, had a snack, and took a nap. I basically did the complete opposite of school for almost two hours every day. After that, I would work on my homework for a while and then take another break simply because I wanted to. My grades dropped, but my mental health soared.

I restored friendships and made new ones. I started dating



my first real boyfriend who I am still with today. I got back into coaching soccer. I helped people that I saw were struggling. I took more time to spend with my family. And above it all, I became happy again.

I ended that year with a 3.7, definitely NOT a 4.0 as I planned, but I couldn't be any happier with that grade. I learned so much that year, and I'm not just talking about the material in school. I learned that I am human. I can't expect myself to work all the time. I learned that I have to balance that work with fun. I have to be happy and at peace with myself so I can get my work done. I finally learned why I'm alive, why I am here right now.

