

Tenzin's College Essay- Class of 2014

"Who do you want to live with?" he asked.

The room suddenly seemed compact and quiet. My mom's eyes stared at me from behind. I felt pressured and unprepared to be make this decision. I turned to her; she was looking back, eagerly and tensely waiting for me to answer my dad's question. I thought about our memories together, *she* was the one who raised me. On the other hand, there was my dad, who moved to New York when I was one, leaving us in Nepal. I hadn't seen him for seven years of my nine. Grasping the phone, I looked away from my mom. *What should I do?* My mom had a specialty for making our time together fun and all those moments rushed into my mind. Living with my dad was a completely different idea. It meant an empty cigarette-filled house, under the same roof as my monstrous stepmother who preferred her own daughter to me. It was an obvious answer, but I was terrified to say it out loud.

"You there?" he asked.

"Yeah" I answered as I pressed the phone to my right ear. My hands were sweaty and hot.

"I need you to choose. Having you move back and forth between your mom and I on the is too complicated."

I breathed in sharply, "My mom."

Hearing myself say it out loud made me feel immediately safe. I was unsure of what my answer was going to mean or how it would affect me in the future but I knew that I'd be fine.

"Okay."

That's all he said. There I was, having chosen the other parent, and all he had to say was *okay*. I handed the phone to my mom and walked out the room.

*It's all good, I still have my mom*, I said to myself. I laid down on the floor of the empty living room and began thinking about the big picture. Realizing that I don't have to see my stepmother anymore comforted me. All it took was a five minute phone call for me to learn that there are people who can't be relied on and my dad was one of those people. I grew up wanting to meet him and have a special father-daughter relationship like my friends. But it never happened, and probably never will. And finally, I'm okay with it.

Separating myself from a parent taught me to make thoughtful choices by thinking about *all* the consequences. It led me to become a realist; someone who thinks about the positives and negatives to all situations. Having my dad let me go also taught me to appreciate those who stick around, like my best friend who has always been by my side. At school, even though I am the youngest out of my friends, they gave me the nickname 'Grandma' because of my maturity.

This past summer, I worked at my school's summer bridge program and also worked at the farmers market, selling organic vegetables. I transformed into a young independent adult who spent the hot summer working. I loved every minute and it felt good to rely on myself in this new way. Mid-junior year, my friends and I were all sitting in a circle during our lunch, discussing what we were looking forward to when we turn eighteen years old. All of them agreed that they were excited about going to parties, I, on the other hand, frantically said "What about college, we are going to be in college!" They

nervously laughed about Grandma's reminder, acknowledging our approaching next step.