

Pursuit and Acceptance

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"Happiness is not a destination or an experience. It's a decision."

Carlos Santana

In my life, and I'm sure in others, I associated happiness with an action, a goal, or perhaps even an object like a piece of candy, something I had to acquire. However, upon reaching that goal, I often saw there was another, better candy slightly farther down the hallway. This created a perpetual search for happiness and comfort that I knew truthfully couldn't be acquired. Not because I was undeserving, but because I had been following the wrong path. I was in the wrong hallway.

I have always searched for acceptance in my life down my own hallway. I considered appreciation to be the one item that would make me most content, make me happiest, but upon receiving the acceptance and the appreciation, I often felt a sense of disappointment. Not disappointment in the people surrounding me, but rather in myself. It was disappointment in the level of happiness I felt. I told myself, "I should be happy now. This is all I've ever wanted."

Instead of searching for validation from the outside, I should be focused on acceptance from within. I must find appreciation for myself, my abilities and my true character, but focusing on outside rewards for so long makes, doing this feel incredibly difficult.

But it isn't too late for me to leave my long hallway, nor is it too late for you to leave yours. We've been wandering aimlessly up and down these same corridors, and they go on forever. We forgot the entrance from which we came still remains open.

I have now learned this: When we decide to make our way back, to rid ourselves of sickness from all the wrong candy, and to finally love ourselves even if it seems more

difficult than grabbing air, it is then that our hallway will no longer seem endless. The candy will taste much sweeter, and happiness will help us find and open all the doors ahead.