

September 29, 2015

Dear Anne Frank,

We've both felt as if we were stuck, isolated, or trapped. You wrote about literally being trapped in your annex for 25 months without being able to go outside or see any of your friends. I was mentally trapped, in a state of confusion with what felt like nobody to talk to. So similar, but also so different. The way you talked about being trapped and not knowing much about anything going on outside is how I felt in my circumstances. I cut myself off from the outside world, forcing myself to stay isolated and detached from everyone.

As I was growing up, my uncle abused me in a way that nobody my age, or any age, should be. It was difficult growing up with that and knowing that people would look at you or talk to you in a different way if they know. I've always despised telling people because after they know, they always act more sympathetic and cautious while around you. I didn't want people to know and I felt like I couldn't tell anyone about it. I felt trapped in my own world, and like nobody understood what it truly felt like to be trapped, until I read your diary. *The Diary of Anne Frank* opened my eyes and I realized that some people truly understood how it felt to be confined, physically or mentally. Also, you helped me to realize that even if I felt trapped, or at war with my own mind, I can always find somebody to talk to or somebody who understands how it feels to be in those circumstances.

Your heart was always so hopeful and easy to forgive. One quote in particular changed my views on the world forever. When you wrote "It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet, I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart." Something in my head shifted. I realized that no matter what, you always need to forgive others for what they've done. You can't go on your whole life holding grudges against people. Anger can change you into someone else. I learned that the hard way. While living in my bubble and shutting out everybody, I was somebody else, someone who I knew in my heart I didn't want to be. I was upset with my uncle, for what he put me through and what he did to me. But I also wasn't a good person, I was easily irritated, always in a bad mood, and very pessimistic. Your writing made me understand that I needed to forgive him, and once I did, my whole personality changed. I became a happier person. I started being more optimistic, and I was an overall better person. Although it seemed impossible to forgive my uncle for what he did, I tried really hard to forget. Once I truly forgave him, my whole perspective and personality changed for the better.

I didn't know it was possible to be so happy under your circumstances. You seemed like such a joyful person, I envied how happy you could be even with what was going on. I strived to make myself that content with how I was coping. One of my favorite things that you wrote was "I've found that there is always some beauty left—in nature, sunshine, freedom, in yourself; these can all help you. Look at these things, then you find yourself again, and God, and then you regain your balance. And whoever is happy will make others happy too." Because it made me realize that I was trying too hard to be happy. I simply needed to look around me at the beauty of the simple things. Once I started to be grateful for everything and everyone around me, I changed for the better. I was a happier person. Just like you found happiness in writing, I found happiness in my family, friends, and reading. Reading gave me an escape, and along with my family and friends I was a lot more carefree, lighthearted, and content.

All in all, I would like to thank you for writing your diary; it inspired me more than you would ever know. I no longer feel as if I'm trapped or alone. You changed my views on the world and how I started to live forever. You made me come to realize that I could find happiness no matter what. You should always forgive, and made me feel like I wasn't the only one who knew how it felt to be trapped.

With much gratitude,

Isabella Christensen