

The experience that I have hated the most here at college was choosing a concentration. I dreaded making a choice, and I felt guilty about my decision for months afterwards. I think some of you know this feeling. I was excited about what I chose to study, but I felt heartsick about all the possibilities I was giving up.

I think the seeds of my heartache were planted many years ago. Growing up, I often took on more than I could handle. I felt that I needed one of those time turners that Hermione had in Harry Potter. My love for learning made me enthusiastic about going to class, but it also has inspired in me the desire to do everything, with no thought about how little time I actually have.

When I was young, my mother kept me busy, and I loved it. She wanted to help me find something that I enjoyed, perhaps enough to pursue it later in life. At school, I enrolled in a French immersion program, preparing to study French and perhaps international relations. Additionally, my Italian grandmother made me curious about the Italian language, and I vowed to learn it from her and study it. After school, I remember running to soccer practice, and then afterward hopping into my mother's car and changing into my ballet tutu for class, then, exhausted but still bright-eyed, playing in my cello lesson, and somehow fitting homework in between. Time commitment as I got older meant giving some activities up, no matter how much I enjoyed them. I finally chose music as my passion in high school, and I threw myself into all the music groups I could. I remember getting excited every time I was about to perform on stage, peeking around the curtain and gasping

at my family and friends waving to me in the crowd. I did that starting from the age of 5 and still do.

My father is also part of the problem. He inspired my enjoyment of all subjects. He taught me never to label myself as bad in math or science, because it would psychologically make me do worse. I learned from him that thinking about how you perceive yourself is important, because if you think that you can succeed, then you can. My father told me on many occasions to find my passion and follow it. Everything would then fall into place.

But when I got here, everything did not fall into place. I wanted to follow my passion for French and Italian, which meant concentrating in Romance Languages. I wanted to follow my passion for the cello, which meant concentrating in Music. And, to make matters impossible, I ran into a new passion, in a psychology course with Daniel Gilbert.

One of the scariest moments was realizing that I couldn't take music courses freshman fall. Try as I might, I had no room in my schedule, because music theory was at the same time as Professor Gilbert's introduction to psychology. I enjoyed the psychology class immensely, but I'd had my heart set on music since I first was on stage with my cello peeking around the curtain. Choosing classes every semester, I naturally chose the one I was interested in- psychology coming first, general education requirements scattering themselves about ... and then French and Italian classes falling into the remaining slots. I joined the Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra, the chamber music program, and other musicals and chamber groups. Even if I couldn't follow through with music classes, I still had music in my life every

day. Every semester, it surprised me that Music and languages were still a part of my life, and I never had to give them up at all. The struggle with determining my psychology major was all because of my false fear of it being fatal to my other interests. That fear was wrong. My dream of living a life full of my passions came true.

I don't think my fear of closing doors is gone forever. I still want to try more things than time allows. But I've finally found somewhere where I have my languages, music, and psychology always in my life.

I bet I'm not the only one in the room who is scared of closing doors. People have so many abilities, and it's hard to choose. But I'm slowly getting more comfortable with the problem of having to choose. I have not found Hermione's time turner, but I am coming to appreciate more something else J.K. Rowling wrote: "It is our choices that show who we truly are, far more than our abilities."

Thank you.