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# Being New and Improved

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## Being new *and* improved

“You may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing that we call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down.” Mary Pickford

I believe in fresh starts, new beginnings, clean slates – call it whatever you want; that is what is so beautiful about them. Walking into a room where nobody knows you or of you can be an extremely nerve wracking thing to do but also one of the most liberating. People are able to look at you and yes, assumptions are made before you open your mouth and are either proven right or wrong when you do, but the point is no one can judge you by anything else other than what they see in that ‘there and then’ or ‘here and now’ moment.

Being a new student in school, a freshman, or even a ‘just hired’ employee is an opportunity to use the lessons learned from past mistakes and a chance to show people a better side of you. It is true that an application or a CV or whatever else got you to where you are sits in a drawer or on a desk somewhere in front of the person that accepted you based on the compilation of those facts, but it is still your choice to live up to those qualities, shock people, or disappoint them.

I read a funny quote once which said, “How can something be new *and* improved? If it is improved then it isn’t new [and vice versa]” and I laughed and agreed. However, embarking on my first year of the rest of my life, my first year in college at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, I now realize that I am indeed new and improved. I have burnt and been burned. I have gotten to the right places at the right times and the wrong places at the most awful of times and I have gotten up, dusted myself off and decided to be a better me. I have decided over time to improve myself and now I am new. I think everyone who wakes up and decided that they will be better than they were the day before is new every time. It is true that we mess up and fall back into the same old patterns but at least we try.

With a new year, new country and new school, I can be whoever I want. I don’t want to be anything else other than myself but I do not want to be judged by what I said or did in the past and of course, by people’s assumptions based on a younger, naïve, less mature image of me. I am not perfect and I definitely want to continue to grow and become someone who is remembered for how true she was to herself and how much I changed the lives around me, for the better. I don’t know how I’m going to do that but I know that I will find a way. This is why I love blank pages because you can write anything you want and I believe in every single being is the ability to improve and then be new.

Ruby Fako