

EVERYTHING WILL BE  
OKAY IN THE END.  
IF IT'S NOT OKAY,  
IT'S NOT THE END.

-JOHN LENNON

### Important information for college applications:

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Now that final admission decisions across America have started to go out, [I want to post this very important message](#)... this is for every single high school senior around the world right now who did not get good news from their top choice school:

It's going to be okay.

I promise.

I know, what you must be thinking, "that's easy for you to say (*director of admissions*)." But hear me out. Every year, I get emails from students who have been denied or waitlisted from (*school name*) asking, "what did I do wrong?" and, "what is wrong with me?" The answer to both of those questions is: *nothing*. (*School name*) was very excited to send out thousands of letters of admission over the past few months, but we also had to send out five times as many letters to students who were not admitted. Around the world right now, there are students just like you who did not get into the school they really wanted. Students who got denied from their top choice school. Students who are thinking that this is it... it is never, ever going to be okay. I'm here to give you a two-phased approach to how you can re-ground yourself, get back on your feet, and seriously, *be okay*.

Phase one: **Do not let this process define you.**

What the college admission committee thinks about your application for admission is *not* what they think about you as a person. It's not a reflection of your character or potential. Admission Offices around the country have internal goals and requirements that they are looking for, and just because you don't meet them, doesn't mean you aren't going to be a great college student somewhere. In some senses, parts of the admission process are beyond your control. (*School name*) could have filled up five freshman classes with students who are academically qualified to attend, but we simply cannot admit all those students. You might be applying to a school that is looking for more female engineers and you happen to be a male liberal arts student. Maybe the school has a finite number of spaces in its film studies program and as much as they'd like, they can't take every amazing, aspiring screenwriter who applied. Maybe a school has a board of directors telling the admission office "we need higher GPAs" and you happen to have been a late-bloomer in high school (like I was!) **Colleges are not denying you as a person, they are denying your application.** What I am saying is, [as tempting as it might be to find faults in yourself, try not to. Instead, take a step back, regroup, and keep going.](#)

As my colleague and good friend (*name*) in Los Angeles wrote to her students, "When life takes a detour, it is only human to feel the wave of difficult emotions that unexpected outcomes often unearth. One of the greatest gifts this process can give you is the ability to come back to that center and that sense of self that this process forces you to look at in the first place. What do you know, deeply and sincerely, to be true and authentic about yourself, your gifts, and your potential? This is sign of an incredibly healthy young mind and strength of character that no college admissions decision can or should ever be able to take away." Amen!

**SPCPA transcripts/student reports are NOT processed during the dates listed below.** *The no processing window extends before and after the longer holiday periods ...* **Spring Break (March 24 - April 11)**

Phase two: **Know that in all likelihood, you're going to go somewhere, and you're going to get a lot out of it.**

Take a look at this [interesting article](#) in *The Atlantic*. According to the article, "there are more than 4 million 18-year-olds in the United States, 3.5 million of them will go to college. And just 100,000 to 150,000 of those (somewhere around 3 percent of the entire age group) will go to selective schools that admit fewer than half of their applicants. College-admissions mania is a crisis for the 3 percent." Three percent! That means 97% of college-bound students are heading to schools that are not considered "selective." The article continues:

"The college-admissions process, which millions of 18-year-olds consider the singular gateway of their young adulthood, is actually just one of thousands of gateways, the sum of which are far more important than any single one. **While hundreds of thousands of 17- and 18-year-olds sit around worrying that a decision by a room of strangers is about to change their lives forever, the truer thing is that their lives have already been shaped decisively by the sum of their own past decisions—the habits developed, the friends made, and the challenges overcome.** Where you go to college does matter, because it's often an accurate measure of the person you're becoming."

Yes!

After you've had some time, check out this [great piece](#) by Frank Bruni about which schools the CEOs of Fortune 500 Companies attended. You might be surprised by the list.

In the end, **it's less about where you go, and more about the steps you've taken to get there and what you do once there.** This has been said time and time again. Parents, this goes for you too, as was [noted in this Huffington Post article](#). My favorite line from the article: "I am going to teach my children that they can be successful doing whatever they want if they follow their dreams and work hard. Going to the best college won't make that happen for them. Giving them the freedom to flourish in their own way in their own time will."

### **Even Directors of Admission Get Rejected**

I want you to close your eyes for a moment. I know, it might be hard to read this with your eyes closed, but maybe metaphorically close them. **Picture yourself nine months from now. You are packing your suitcase to head home from your first semester of college. It probably had its ups and downs, you've made some new friends, and learned a lot about yourself. But, for most of you, and for the most part, you'll be feeling okay. Maybe even a lot better than okay.** You've likely gotten over what went down last year and are settling into your first year of college, and the rest of your life. And you know what? You're doing pretty darn good!

I want to tell you one last story. This is a story about a young (*name*) from Bethesda, MD. At 17 years old, they applied to the flagship university in North Carolina, their dream school. Their sister was a junior there at the time and having the time of their life. It was THE school for (*name*). The only school that they could possibly attend. The only place they could be successful and happy. On December 15, 2000 (gosh I'm old) they got a letter in the mail. Said flagship North Carolina school did not want them nearly as badly as they wanted them.

That was it. Life was over. If I wasn't going there, I wasn't going *anywhere*, I told my dad. Life as I knew it... was over.

A few months later, the kind folks at (*name*) sent me a letter of admission in the mail. In my mind, it was no flagship NC School, but maybe, just maybe, I could be happy there. And just maybe, it would be okay.

A few years back, I was named the Director of Admission at (the college that accepted them). So I guess what I am saying is: even Directors of Admission get rejected. No matter how you feel today, how you felt this week, and how you think you'll feel next year... you are all going to be okay. Trust me.