

Letter to My First-Year Self

By: Maggie McNamara Mandal

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LETTER TO MY First-Year SELF

Five senior dance majors reflect on their college experiences.

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After all the work that goes into applying to college BFA programs, it can seem like getting that long-awaited acceptance letter is the be-all and end-all. But talk to most seniors, and they'll tell you that acceptance is just the beginning of a whirlwind experience. We asked five senior dance majors from some of the nation's top programs to look back on their college journeys and offer advice to their freshman selves.



Meagan King
The Ailey School and
Furham University

Dear Freshman Meagan,

You're entering your dream school as a bright-eyed young woman on cloud nine, hungry to continue learning. That joy and light in your heart will never dim. The self-empowerment you'll feel from pursuing an arts career is phenomenal because you're one of the few brave ones.

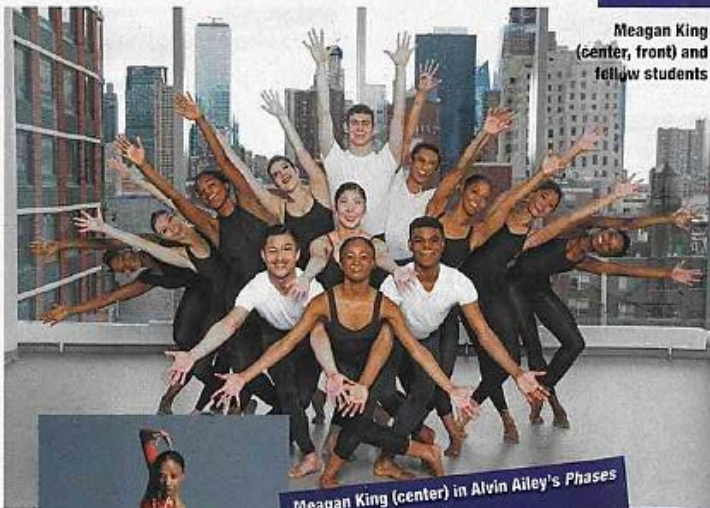
You're nervous, but the nerves are there because you care. Acknowledge them, but never let them cripple you. Channel them into strength. Remember three simple words: I am able. Only you can grant yourself permission to step into your greatness.

Every high, low, loop, and sharp turn on this college roller coaster will give you a piece to help you build the person you'll become. Each day you enter the studio, remind yourself of the "Why" that drew you in, and your passion will carry you.

This program can be quite intense. Self-care is important. Don't choose extra studying over an hour of needed sleep. You're only your best self when you take care of yourself. Allot time for rejuvenation: a walk in the park, meeting good friends, or, best of all, sleep! You are a person first, before you are a dancer.

We've come so far, Meagan. Awaiting graduation, I'm thrilled to see where life will take us. You're going to soar freely and write your story in the sky. You are light. Shine on, little queen. You are doing just fine. You will be amazed at God's blessings to come.

Meagan King



Meagan King (center, front) and fellow students



Meagan King (center) in Alvin Ailey's Phases



THANKS BACK FROM YOU TO MEAGAN KING AND HER FELLOW STUDENTS. MEAGAN KING AND HER FELLOW STUDENTS. COURTESY THE AILEY SCHOOL