

When I first started my time here at Camden, It seemed that I was told a hundred and one different things by what seemed about a hundred and one different people. So along with my very limited concentration span, most of what I was being told barely stayed in my head for more than a week. But one of the things that did get stuck in my head and has stayed with me these past two years was some advice that the head of sixth form gave to us at the very start.

What she told us was that a key thing we should all focus on whilst we're here, was developing our Resilience and applying it to all parts of our life. She then said that through being Resilient, having the ability to bounce back from our difficulties and overcome them, we would soon find that the challenges of school and life would become gradually easier and easier. Until things that used to seem major, began to seem manageable.

At first I didn't quite know what she meant or I sort of just passed it off thinking, 'yeah of course I know how to be resilient, I know everything'. Which definitely showed I had that naive, beginning of year 12 mindset where everything seemed simple and easy and the full force of A levels hadn't quite kicked in yet. But now looking back at her advice I realise that what she was asking us to do was to try and always be strong and confident in ourselves. So that no matter what was thrown at us we would never feel that we would become defeated.

This was something that, in retrospect, I did not actually know how to do. And then towards the end of year 12 I was faced with a very serious and quite scary personal challenge. The issue that I had to deal with had the potential to completely change my life forever, so, from that moment, I tried to make it my utmost determination to apply this word resilient throughout my everyday life. Which then meant that, on top of the workload I had from school, I had to simultaneously face up to the new personal challenges that arose on a daily outside of school. It was undeniably tough, but it was through this term resilience that I was able to continue to live everyday as normally as possible despite the difficult personal moment I was experiencing. But now, I can happily say that those things I once saw as significant challenges aren't challenges anymore, and, looking back over my time here, I feel that learning to be resilient has been one of my proudest achievements.

So you see, what I have learnt is that in order to become resilient you must be able to take care of yourself, know your strengths but also your limits. And understanding how sometimes taking a break from work to reflect and gather your thoughts can be far more beneficial than pushing yourself to exhaustion. I also realised that I would never be able to tackle any problems if in my head I didn't feel strong enough to fight them. And I found that the best way to gather strength and develop resilience was to approach every one of my mistakes as a lesson rather than a failure. So I then tried to apply this approach to all parts of my life and especially my school work. and I eventually began to see every bad grade or low mark as a way of improving rather than as a defeat.

Although this may sound like it should be coming from someone who very much has their life together and knows what they want to do, I'm very much not that person. Because you see another thing I've learnt from trying to be Resilient, is that things are never going to play out like you think they will. I'd never thought I'd run for head boy but after a spontaneous decision to do so....things ended up turning out quite well.

And this just proves how academically and personally the past two years have been nothing far from a complete rollercoaster ride. and they have proved to me that although you may an idea in your head of how you want your life to go, things will never quite happen as you expect.

So it's definitely been a journey these past two years, for all of us I think. And it certainly hasn't been easy. Throughout our time in Sixth Form we've constantly felt challenged and pushed to do more and achieve more than we ever thought we would be capable of. And through the extensive array of masterclasses, enrichments and assemblies, this school has offered an abundance of inspiration to each one of us. But also at the same time, we've never felt more encouraged and supported the whole way through. The fine mixture of being supportive and encouraging whilst also being stimulating and demanding has led me and others to do things that we never saw ourselves doing.

For me, standing on this stage in front of all these people is definitely one of those things. And I've kept this mindset of being Resilient with me at all times.

And so as I reflect over the past two years and the latest chapter in my life, I want to recognise all of those who have helped me become the person I am today.

So I want to thank all the teachers who had the absolute pleasure of teaching me. Through your excitement and passion for your subjects you made me feel confident in my knowledge, and ability to push and challenge myself. And I am now excited rather than intimidated for what the next chapter of my life will hold.

I want to thank the pastoral team in the sixth form for providing me with a great support network and an abundance of opportunities that helped inspire me and so many others I know.

I even want to thank Frances Mary Buss for being resilient, against all the challenges that she faced. And despite all the hardships she encountered, she was still able to come out a pioneer and key stone for education and proudly set up the institution I call my school.

But most importantly, the person who I am most proud of right now and want to thank the most is myself. For overcoming some of the hardest years of my life and by being resilient and courageous in tackling all my personal challenges. I feel that I am a much stronger and more emotionally robust person than I was two years ago. And I'll always and forever be a true Camden girl.

Thank you.