



PERSPECTIVE, POST-GRAD DIARIES

Natalie's Post Grad Diaries: Working For Brit + Co, Pursuing A Dance Career and Rooming With Mom and Dad

JUNE 26 by MOLLY LONGEST

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- Hometown:** Englewood Cliffs, NJ
- Year you graduated:** 2017
- Where did you go to school?** Fordham University (the Bronx campus!)
- What did you study?** Communications and Media Studies with a concentration in Journalism

Briefly describe what your college experience was like: Definitely not the best four years of my life, but maybe the most important. I grew so much as a person and for that I'm thankful, but at the same time there are still some things I wish I had done differently. I spent a lot of time focusing on dance, interning, and letting my social anxiety take over that I probably could've gone to a couple of more parties, taken advantage of more free stuff, etc....But ultimately, if things had gone differently, maybe I wouldn't be where I am now. I tell myself and I try to truly believe that everything happens for a reason.

Where are you living now? I moved back home to Jersey to live with my parents because it takes me no more than an hour to commute into NYC. How could I pass up free rent?

What are you doing with your post grad time? I'm currently a freelance writer, while also pursuing dance professionally. I've been a dancer since I was nine years old so when I started to picture what post-grad life would look like I knew that I didn't want to give up dancing. Hence why I decided to try freelancing over getting a full-time job.

A majority of my work can be found in Brit & Co. where I mainly contribute to their Ladies First series. The series features women who are doing inspiring and empowering things in the world, so there's always a lot to write about. Not only am I thankful to be writing consistently, but also to be writing about topics that I'm passionate about. I remember a time when I was struggling for ideas.

I also write for a print magazine in New Jersey called BC the Mag. I tend to feature entrepreneurs that are changing the area that I grew up in. One of my favorite articles so far was about Bergen County becoming a craft beer destination. I joke that I'm just trying to convince people New Jersey isn't that bad.

What did your post-grad path to your current job look like? Did you start right away?
Take some time off? When I graduated I initially wasn't worried about not having a job, but I ended up hating not having a routine. I also felt like I let myself down because I had

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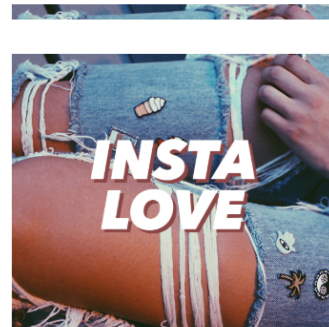
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just come from being really busy and feeling accomplished at school to not knowing what was next for me. I eventually got a part-time job at a spin studio (because hey, free classes), but after 7 months, I decided to no longer work there. I was mentally and physically tired a lot given the kind of hours I was working, so I wasn't putting enough effort into the things I really loved. Regardless, I feel like the whole experience taught me a lot about myself.

Throughout that time, I was meeting with writers and sending out pitches (rarely receiving a response), but it wasn't until October that I got the connection at Brit & Co.

What does a normal weekday look like for you? Normally I wake up around 8 am, enjoy a cup of coffee and check Twitter. I eventually get on my computer to answer emails or write whatever article I'm working on that week/pitching new ones! I might even have an interview scheduled at some point. By midday, I usually head into the city to either assist dance classes or take classes of my own. On the days I'm in the city all day, I'll bring my laptop to do work in between classes and rehearsals. By the time I come home, it's usually 10 pm and my mom has dinner waiting for me. (God bless her.)

How about the weekend? I used to work on the weekends and I think that slowly killed my soul so now I'm starting to prioritize my social life. Friday nights are usually low key because I end my day with dance. If anything, I'll work on Saturday and try to do something with my friends on Saturday night. I like to spend my Sunday mornings with my parents, but now that summer is here I'm hoping to be more active.

What has been the hardest adjustment for you going from college to post-grad life? So many things. Number one: not being around your friends all of the time and for me, not having roommates. I have a handful of friends who also still live at home in Jersey, but we're on completely different schedules that it takes so much of an effort to prioritize time with each other. Number two: exactly [what Alyssa said](#), not knowing what's coming next! I chose two careers that don't have linear career paths, so I feel like I'm constantly looking for the next thing. In a way, it's the only way for me to gauge if I'm successful at what I'm doing, but I also hate living in a constant state of 'am I doing enough?'

What has been the best part? The fact that I am completely taking control of what I want to do with my life. In college, as great as it was, there were still so many limitations. Now, I no longer feel obligated to do things that don't serve me. I truly believe that now is the time to do what you love. When I'm old and can't dance anymore then you can talk to me about settling down, but right now I have an able body and I'm going to use it. My friend and I like to say we're making shit happen. We believe that we have the ability to do exactly what we want with our lives. That doesn't mean that we don't have insecurities or self-doubt; it just means we don't live our lives by those notions.

What helped you land your current position? I'm a part of a group specifically for freelancers and it's been an incredible resource for me. I reached out to a writer in the group who had the same interests as me and had written for the same publications I wanted to write for. Not only did she give me advice, but she quickly connected me with her editor. And of course, [my clips](#) at the Lala! I sent a few of them to my editor and that's what helped her decide to bring me on.

The position with BC the Mag came from a connection that I had since sophomore year of college.

Knowing what you do now, what advice would you give your college self? Basically what I said at the beginning of this interview: everything happens for a reason. The people you meet, the classes you take, the good and the bad, it all makes you who you are.

What's one thing you worried about in college, now being beyond it, you wish you hadn't? Just about everything. But mostly, whether or not people liked me. I so badly wanted a group of friends because I thought that's what college was about, but you just have to let that kind of thing happen naturally.

In 5 years you hope to be: All I hope is to have accomplished the things that I'm currently working towards. To have a byline in a major women's magazine and to have danced on bigger stages, possibly in other cities. I realize that the common thing I want for both of my careers is for my work to reach the most amount of people that it can. And by then, I hope to have moved out of my parent's home and into a really cute apartment in New York.

Rapid fire round:

Current binge show: I just finished the Netflix original series *On My Block*. I chose it at random, but I surprisingly got really into it.

Favorite way to unwind: Writing in my journal. It's a way for me to mentally reset.

Favorite song right now: "The Future" by San Holo and James Vincent McMorrow



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Cause/issue that's moving you: Well on a small scale, there's a petition going around at Fordham for the television station to get their own studio space, which might have something to do with the fact that the administration doesn't provide enough resources to the Communications department. As an alumna, I feel like this sums up four years of constantly convincing people that my major and, now my job, is important and has value in this world. And pretty much anything that *truthfully* empowers women.

Something good you read for pleasure lately (can be a book, an article, an Instagram caption, etc.): "It's important to be aware of numbers, benchmarks and projections, but, at the end of the day, if you've connected with just one human being in a real way, you've won." - Jelena Aleksich, the founder of The Confetti Project

This came from an Instagram caption on one of her latest posts and it's something that I need constantly remind myself.

Morning drink order: Every morning I walk over to the Nespresso machine that my parents own and make myself a café latte.

Current favorite social media account you follow: It's a tie between @sourelatable, which is a meme account that anyone who rides at SoulCycle will appreciate, and @the_confetti_project because the combination of gorgeous photos and inspiring quotes are perfect.

3 things you can't leave home without: phone, phone charger, and headphones

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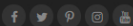
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