

"Sometimes the Smallest Pond Can Be Greater than the Biggest One"

A story by Abby Williamson on Lauren Buchanan; the girl who dreamt her entire childhood of playing softball at a division one school. As those dreams became a reality for her, she realized when she got there it was not all she thought it would be. As she went through this, although it was a hard time, she gained confidence and growth within herself to make the decision to transfer to a smaller university. It was when she got to Georgia College and State University where she finally found exactly where she is supposed to be, making her realize that moving to a smaller environment can sometimes be the best risk to take.

Tell me About a Time Where you Had to take a Risk.

When talking to Lauren the first thought to ask her was to talk about a time where she had to take a risk. She went on to explain, **"I was deciding on whether or not I wanted to play college softball. I had 1 offer, to a Division One school. I wasn't a huge fan of the distance, or the school itself, but it was what I had dreamed of my entire life. I figured it was the right choice to go to that college and do what I always thought I wanted to do. Turns out, it was not the experience that I had wanted. I'm pretty grateful for the opportunity and even though it was a really bad time in my life, I was able to gain a lot of independence, maturity, and overall "grow up" a lot. It was one of the scariest choices I ever made. I did the best that I could with the information that I had at the time. I don't regret my choice, going through it all made me stronger in the end and for that I am grateful"**. Her response was interesting in the way she was able to stay in touch with her emotions even when going through a hard reality of not liking the DI school as much as she thought she would. When she explained going through it all made her stronger, that led into the curiosity of a time when she did not take a risk and regretted it...

Tell me About a Time Where you Did Not Take a Certain Risk and Regretted it.

It was in this thought where Lauren decided to open up and reveal a personal challenge that made her response of the DI school not being what she thought it would be for her make sense, **"I feel as though the one thing I regret most in my life is not putting myself out there enough. I want the friends and the experiences that come with them, but that's not possible without meeting those friends first. Coming to Georgia College, I have really gained a lot more confidence when approaching people and starting conversations. Most things in life I don't regret, but limiting myself is definitely something I regret and won't continue to do in the future"**. When Lauren reveals she wishes she had put herself out there more there was a realization even more that a smaller environment in the long run could be more fitting for an individual struggling with the need for a community that is also a quiet soul. In finding out this side of herself, that helped her come to terms with her love of a smaller environment, sparked the question of an area where she could be struggling with now...

What is something you are struggling the most with in your life right now?

In the conclusion of Lauren's interview she opened up about a current struggle she is going through, **"I think I am struggling most with my self image. I look around campus and see all of those beautiful women and the first thing that comes to mind is that I look nothing like them. Some days I feel so confident and amazing, and others I don't even want to leave the house. I am trying hard to not let how I look affect how I am feeling, in reality it shouldn't even matter. I just want to work on focusing more on what makes me happy and what I can control"**. When she makes the point that she is struggling with her image currently, it brings more attention to the fact that so many young women are having these feelings of doubt. Throughout Lauren's biggest risks and times of regret she has always seemed to have the most trouble in finding a sense of belonging and confidence. At the end of talking about her struggle, she explains how she just wants to focus on what makes her happy, showing the connection to the belongingness and confidence growth she gained from going through the disappointment of the DI school not being what she expected it to be and realizing that a smaller school was the best fit for her even though it was truly a larger risk. Lauren Buchanan is a true reflection of an individual where choosing a smaller pond can be what is the most fulfilling after going through a time that is difficult.

