Life Is Like a Piano. What You Get Out of It Depends on How You Play It

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“Life is like a piano. What you get out of it depends on how you play it.”

Lydia Wilson

You’ve got to grasp your song’s beauty. Wake up at four in the morning, brew coffee, and stare at the fresh snow in the darkness of dawn. You’ve got to sit down next to the man at the airport who’s reading your favorite book and start a conversation. Come home after a bad day and burn your skin in the shower. Lie in your freshly washed sheets that smell like your cheap lavender scented detergent you got at Target. Stop taking everything so personally. Stop getting yourself upset at menial things that won’t matter in two years. Sleep in on Saturday mornings and wake up early on Sundays. At the end of the day, I just want to be proud of the person I have become. I want to be proud of the love I gave, and part of that is the effort I put into learning piano this semester. I play “New World Symphony Theme” on an icy Sunday night, but I don’t want to. I’d rather play “Shining Stars” just because it’s easier. But what if what I need isn’t easier? If I only played the pages that I was good at, what would I have to show for it in May? If I chose to play the hard songs, but only focused on the notes, paying no regard to its dynamics, what good does that do me? You can go through life, checking your boxes, but if you ignore the things that make life worth playing, you have missed the point. Life can get quiet, but that doesn’t mean it’s boring. Like in piano, when your song is quiet, there is typically something bigger coming your way, something louder, an apex that makes you say, “Ahh, that’s why the song was quiet.” This variation is paramount to the success of moments that are supposed to be grand. So, when I play the piano alone in the HFA at 9pm, I remember that the effort I put into piano is the same results I will get out of it. I played “New World Symphony” for over an hour that night, until I could go through the whole song without messing up, paying attention to the changes I was to make, not because I wanted to, but because that is what music demands of its voice. I must demand the same effort and intention of myself if I want any sort of accomplishment worth telling people. In life, you don’t get to restart a piece you messed up, which makes it critical to live with an objective; go slow if you have to, learn the sound of each note and realize that piano isn’t always played in legato, it doesn’t always immediately come together. Let your heart be the metronome of your life. And at the end of the semester, at the end of your life, say, “Look how far I’ve come.”