

Sankofa; I see this word on my arm and I smile. I see strength in a woman who once believed she was weak. My tattoo is a daily reminder to help push me through any difficulties I come across. My past has made me who I am today. My suffering has helped give me meaning in life.

The globe and the dirt on my hand illustrate that my past was crummy but I chose to not let it define me. I chose to stop blaming the world. I chose to grow and blossom into the world.

The globe also illustrates the world of psychology, education and volunteering. In one of my psychology classes I had learned that volunteering was good for depression. I became a weekly volunteer for many organizations. I also got a job that I was passionate about and figured out what my true passion in school is. I started doing things that I loved. As selfless as it sounds, my life became all about me. The biggest thing I did for myself was travel through Europe by myself. I signed up for a volunteering program in Naples, Italy and taught English in elementary schools. I travelled through Amsterdam, Italy, Rome and Paris. This was a trip of a lifetime. Education is important to me; I want to help make a difference in other peoples lives. My goals in life include being a counsellor and teaching English around the world to kids in need.

The watch on my hand illustrates time. When I was going through a hard time in my life the pressure from my family of not knowing what I was doing was the perfect cherry on top. My parents always had a set age for certain milestones. In my parents mind, graduating, getting married and starting my own family all have an exact age. It was as if they had my whole life planned out for me. Psychology and Kwantlen Polytechnic University have taught me mindfulness. I started living in the present

moment. When it comes to studying and finishing my assignments, I try to take things one day at a time. I try to make the most of the day and accomplish as much as possible.

The hands on my arms illustrate others trying to pull me down from success. It took me a long time to realize that majority of the people in my life didn't care about my happiness. I was surrounded by negativity and I knew that needed to change. I pushed a lot of people away and became very picky with the company I keep. Learning how to be independent is something no one ever taught me. It wasn't easy but now I don't depend on anyone other than myself. I am no longer embarrassed of my past. I am no longer a victim. I am a survivor of sexual assault. Everything that has happened in my life has become a part of my story.