My self-portrait – a collage of pictures

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I grew up as a sheltered kid, so people have been the biggest shapers of who I am today. My portrait is a collage of pictures of things and people I found to be a big of my life so far- much of it being family, as well as experiences from music and travel. My portrait starts in the center with the first picture of me with my parents at my baptism. I chose it not because of the baptism, but because it is the first picture of me with my parents. Surrounding it are several of my favorite pictures of me with each parent separately. This first section is titled by my name, with a matching subtitle of *birth*. The subtitle of the next section is *death*, under the title *Family*. My father died five years ago, and apart from him being a big reason why I am who I am today, his last week was one of the most special and memorable weeks of my life, where all of his children were together for the first time, and I had the experience of being surrounded by all the immediate family I have, which never happens as we are scattered across the globe.

This section ends at the top right with a picture of his immediate family after his death. This naturally includes my immediate family (mother and two brothers). This guides the portrait to the *Siblings* in the upper left with the subtitle *growing up*. Here I included pictures of my two little brothers as babies and how they grew up. They drove me crazy, and still can, but I love them to death now and they are inspirational and I treasure them.

The *Sibling* section ends with a picture of all three of us backstage after singing Carmina Burana at the May Festival this past spring. Such a wonderful experience that showed me once again how I love performing. This naturally leads to the *Music* section with the subtitle *performing*. Here I have included the three instruments that I have worked with most: piano, violin and voice, and some of the performances and experiences that helped shape me. One of the biggest performances was playing the violin with my high school chamber orchestra on Carnegie Hall stage.

Next to it is a picture of me singing at my grandmothers 90th birthday party in Germany this summer. This leads to the section titled *Change* subtitled *love*, which is mostly dedicated to her. I included a picture of us when I was two, and another taken this summer, seventeen years later. These pictures being in Germany easily leads to the following section named *Travel* with the subtitle *friends*, because the way I see it - you can’t travel without making friends. I caught what I call “the travel bug” when I visited California alone for the first time four years ago, and have been addicted to traveling ever since. I included a picture of my first trip, and subsequent trips to Europe – one of the Rock of Gibraltar and one with a friend in France by the Chateau d’Usse. The subscripts *love* and *friends* both tie into a picture of my boyfriend- a relationship that has shown me so much love and happiness that I thought it important enough to include.

The portrait has kind of a snail shape as it loops around, with everything connected beyond the titles, subtitles and glitter connections I assigned to it. It is a connection of what shaped me. This is how I know what love is, and how my passion to learn has been nurtured – this then ties in the years of music education and performance, and traveling – how it broadens your view of the world, and provides another resource to learn. Family, and especially now my mother and brothers provide an unconditional support that I can fall back into, which helps me now as I start a new chapter with college and its experiences. I know that the next collage I make of my the next chapters of my life will include many of the aspects here, but I am happily curious to what other new sections it will have from what I still have to experience and learn.