

In Another Life, This is Our Life

The day I entered the Women and Comedy course in the poorly lit basement of University Hall, I had little understanding then of how drastically my life would change from that moment forward. Throughout my upbringing, I was an outsider. Isolated by my passions and “stubborn” opinions of how I believed the world should be. Nevertheless, entering that class my second year of undergrad, on campus instead of through Zooms and isolation, would be the first time in my life that I was surrounded by like-minded advocates. Back then, I would meet one of the most important mentors and women in my life, Dr. Linda Mizejewski. Dr. Mizejewski would go on to not only teach me the intricacies of film, from horrors to romantic comedies, but also the way women have quietly shaped and woven their hearts in these stories and history. She would teach me the power of storytelling. Ever since I was a little girl, I was captivated by movies and tv shows. But as I got older, I began to realize the reason I loved them so much was that I was yearning for all the unique paths my own life could take. It was getting older that made me think about how most of the stories I fell in love with never had someone with a description like mine. It was with age that I realized not only the power of storytelling but the danger. How disheartening it is to be in a world that doesn't want to hear your story or make stories for you. Throughout my time with Dr. In Mizejewski's classes, I began to see how much time and effort go into telling stories. She would teach us that our stories matter more than anything. She would introduce us to various stories where a woman was told it was impossible, and yet she did it anyway. At the end of our first class of many together, Linda would recommend that I join the study abroad trip she had been planning for years. With that trip, I fell into my own. I became someone I had always dreamed of, the girl who would go on vast travels on her own and form friendships that would last a lifetime. I would learn that I, too, have the power to make my own stories. To create my own life I can be proud of. With Linda, I began to see that even in a world that perhaps didn't want to see us or hear us, women had been, since the beginning of time, cultivating the narrative. A group of us on this trip abroad went to see *Everything Everywhere All At Once* in theaters. That movie became one of the many movies I would associate with Dr. Mizejewski. To her, I dedicate a song from the movie, “This is A Life”, because no matter what alternate universe or reality has made us, in this life, I am changed for the better because of her. There were many paths and stories untold, but for the life I was given, I will take each step towards the story I want to be told. The story Dr. Mizejewski, since the moment I met her, has been telling me is more than worthy of being heard.

Dr. Mizejewski knew my passions were always to become a doctor, and despite our different backgrounds and aspirations, she supported me in nurturing the part of me that would be an advocate for her patients, an empathetic and understanding physician, and someone who listened to one's lived experience without judgment. I was able to see that there was no life where I could become a doctor without my experiences with Dr. Mizejewski and all the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies department. Because of Linda, I know I must continue to tell and listen to stories. To hear my patients' stories and hear them for everything they have come to me for. I will keep pushing others to do the same. In a field like medicine, it can be difficult to take the time to listen when there never seems to be enough time. But without these stories, we would never get the full picture of our patients; we would never understand the movie. As I continue to grow and watch more of my own story unfold, I hope I can be a guiding light in other young girls' stories. I hope my own experiences can help others see that our stories have significance and that they have power. We can write ourselves into the narrative because they have always been our stories to write; this is our life.



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Khushi is incredibly passionate about patient advocacy, holistic healthcare, and developing medical education with an intersectional lens. In her free time, she enjoys travelling and spending time with her family.