

Grace Nunekpeku
T-shirt Final Essay

Front of shirt



Back of shirt



I will not lie, I find it quite difficult to talk about myself. Not because I do not know what to say but because I get nervous talking about myself. I like to lay low and be in the background. Ironically, no matter how much I try to stay hidden, I am always found. No matter how much I try to quiet down, I am always heard. No matter how much I run from my shadow it always finds me. Frankly, when I first heard about this project, my heart dropped to my stomach. The thought of making a shirt describing who I am and talking about it with my classmates made me nervous but here we are now so I will give it a go.

I bought a men's white t-shirt in an extra large. I bought my shirt three sizes bigger than my normal size because I wanted it to fit me as a shirt dress that stops right above my knees. A lot of times I like clothes that are loose fitted because of the freedom it gives and that is also another reason why I bought the size that I did. Although I am feminine, I like to wear a men's t-shirt because of the way it is cut and designed so it just made sense for me to buy a men's shirt for my project.

I adhered pink, shiny gems on the front of my shirt and wrapped some around the bottom of my sleeves. When I was younger my favorite color was pink and I picked these color gems to remind me of who I was then. I also picked the shiny gems because it reminds me of how I view myself and how others view me. Most of the time I am in a joyful bright mood and I want to always be reminded of that. My happiness and optimistic view of life is very important to me and is a piece of me I never want to lose. As someone who also deals with anxiety, I think being optimistic keeps me sane and grounded and I cannot imagine what or where I would be without the joy I have and bring to others.

On the back of my shirt I adhered the words "WORTHY OF IT ALL". Everyone around me knows that I am a hard worker. When I want something and set a goal towards that thing I work so hard to achieve it. But, what is achieving a goal if it is not celebrated or recognized? I am so hard on myself that even when I achieve a goal, I do not take the time to take a break and be proud. When I do give myself a break I end up beating myself up about it and call myself lazy which is not true. At times, I also get imposter syndrome feeling like a fraud who is not deserving of the things I have accomplished. So it was important for me to put those words on my shirt, for it to be a constant reminder that all I achieve and work towards is well deserved.

I also adhered cherry blossom flowers all over my shirt by sewing them on individually. When I looked up the meaning of the cherry blossom flower, Google stated that it represents "a time of renewal and optimism." It also mentioned how the pink color of the flower marks the ending of winter and is a sign of the beginning of spring. I attached these flowers to my shirt to signify a new chapter of my life. I am a very shy and anxious person, and because of that I used to be scared to try new things. For example, the thought of going to the gym to work out used to give me so much anxiety that I would end up changing my mind instead of going to the gym.

One day I finally asked myself “what if you were scared but did it anyway”? So I muscled the courage and went. I was so nervous but I went ahead and followed through. After that day it became easier for me to step into the gym. Even on the days I feel anxious, I still show up and everytime I leave I feel proud. I realized that I was changing. I was blooming into someone new. The cherry blossoms are a reminder for me to continue blooming. In order for the flowers on the cherry blossom tree to bloom they had to go through the hard cold winter, but in the end they came out victorious and bloomed. The cherry blossom flower reminds me that it is ok to go through uncomfortable things if they make you grow and become a better person.

In conclusion, who I am is not one sided, I am not just shy or quiet, I also shine and am a go-getter. I understand that it is ok to be shy and quiet. I understand that I can be all that and still let my light shine. I understand that it is ok for me to have a seat, and take up space at the table and still be nervous while doing it. No matter how uncomfortable I get, I want to keep going and try my best because I have a lot of things I want to accomplish and in order to get to where I want to be I have to push through. That is the only way I will continue to bloom into who I am meant to be.