

# I Am Still a Hamilton Kid

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**A**t 9 years old, I could recite the entire 2-hour-and-15-minute soundtrack by heart. Almost a decade later, I am 18, and the 46-song soundtrack is still muscle memory. (I could sing it for you, but *Hamilton* has assumed a childish and embarrassing connotation for my generation.) Different songs mean more to me now. *Satisfied*, for instance, hits closer to home than I would like. In the song, Angelica, Eliza's sister and best friend, diagnoses Hamilton with perpetual dissatisfaction. She sees herself in him—sharp, ambitious minds incapable of fulfillment. Angelica and Hamilton both challenge the status quo, fighting to prove themselves. While Hamilton's ambition and constant dissent led him to a fatal duel with his former best friend, Angelica retired her feminist dreams and molded her life to fit the world's expectations, marrying a wealthy Englishman and living out 58 comfortable years.

I am more of an Angelica than a Hamilton. I grew up with incredible resources as a white woman raised in New York City. America 250 years later looks different (though not different enough in some ways), so I make these comparisons with a grain of salt. Still, like both of them, I'm afraid I will never be satisfied. My mind works against itself—I cannot let myself take pride in my achievements. I self-sabotage in school and extracurriculars. I was given the gift of empathy and amazing friends, yet I feel perpetually disdainful of all I have. Instead of writing 51 of the 85 *Federalist Papers*, I lie in bed and let deadlines pass. I will perform in other areas of my life, like sports or the arts, to convince myself I am not failing at school or socially—and vice versa.

I could chalk it up to ADHD or some mental

health bullshit, but I will always circle back to the same self-sabotaging idea that I have a weak mind. I tell myself I am useless, too rotten to deserve success. I convince myself that love will never find me because, even if it does, I will no longer enjoy it. I believe that I cannot maintain friendships—or, someday, marriage—because decades of loyalty seem impossible for me (*classic Hamilton*). On paper, history attests that I am more than capable of achieving these things, yet I remain skeptical. Perhaps the inability to learn from my past is an ironic kind of hubris. Despite my doubt, I still crave proof—some external reassurance that I am enough. Too much of me is the kind of person who depends on validation from others to feel happy. I am in an enduring fight between adherence to the status quo and saying, “fuck it.” It has been 18 years, and I am not satisfied with anything or anyone I have done.

Recently, I was playing a game of *Would you rather?* with my parents. My dad asked if we would rather have eternal life or not. I immediately said that yes, I would want to live forever. My mom and dad both said that they would not. Looking at me, my dad said, “Youth.”

He does have a point—I am young and hungry. I am searching for answers, for purpose, for meaning in the micro and macro aspects of life. Maybe I just need to take a deep breath and accept that *time* explains my turmoil.

But what if I end up dead in New Jersey one morning, shot by my best friend, with my wife and children asleep at home, with a nation waiting for me to complete my service?