



The Importance of Permanence

By Becca Shier

Permanent /pur-muh-nuhnt/

Adj: Intended to exist or function for a long, indefinite period without regard to unforeseeable conditions.

Instead of giving an abstract description of what permanence means to me, I've decided to break down the above definition to help support my perspective. I looked at several different "textbook" definitions, and when I came across this one, something about it really resonated with me.

The first half of this definition is pretty clear. When we talk about permanence or permanent connections, they need to be created with the intention that they will last indefinitely. Now it's not realistic to assume that 100 percent of all relationships will last or survive forever, but with work, some can. More than one would expect. When I was in foster care, there were few adults whom I trusted but only one of those people was explored as someone who could play a bigger role in my life. The more options that are looked into, the bigger the chance is of finding someone who can possibly play a permanent role in a young person's life.

The second half of this definition is probably why I fell in love with it so immediately. Not only do youths deserve someone who will stay by their side into their adult and senior years, but also someone who is there unconditionally. If our friends left our sides because of a mistake we made or our husbands and wives abandoned us after a disagreement, we would all be so lonely. So imagine not having a dependable parent or adult who you can confide in or who can teach you the valuable skills we all need to succeed in this society. One who will not give up on you or even miss you after not hearing from you for a week.

I wasn't sure I had this person until I was 16 years old — and I'm glad that I do have that connection when there are many youth who don't have that privilege.

Let's commit to making this happen for every youth!

