

Five

Five is the most perfectly balanced odd number, bordering perfection so closely that it could almost be considered an honorary even number. It is interwoven with everything that matters, forming the framework of its more influential multiples: 10, 15, 30, etc. Five is embedded into the fabric of life—five fingers on each hand, five senses that shape our perception, and five weekdays structuring our rhythm. Whether in time, symmetry, or the core of our existence, five serves as a personal testimony: both deliberate and essential.

Ever since I was five, I've found comfort in numbers—especially five—drawn to their harmony and clinging to them like turning the dial to the perfect volume, hoping they drown out the noise I can't control. Five became more than a numerical symbol; it gave a sense of order, a way to demand structure amid the chaos of my life. In middle school, I scrupulously planned everything: schedules for sleepovers, task lists for projects, and even rehearsing conversations. I embraced being the one everyone relied on, not only to help others, but to satisfy my need for control, convinced that taking on everything would guarantee perfection.

Over time, my obsession with control spiraled into a mania for maintaining a flawless image. A phobia of appearing inadequate consumed me; on the outside, my life seemed flawless, but internally, I felt lost. Even my birthday, January 4th, 2006, sits tantalizingly close to the number I claim as my own. I wore five plastered proudly on my chest like a badge, but beneath it, I wrestled unmet expectations and suppressed desires.

Thanks to my participation in nearly a dozen clubs, five of which I hold leadership positions in at my school of fewer than 200 students, nearly everyone knows me, or knows of me, as the 'girl in everything.' While my interests and hobbies are genuine, my involvement at this scale is far from necessary. Some clubs I entertain less out of passion and more out of a

compulsion to take anything I encounter and shape it into the best version of itself. While sometimes a strength, it became a flaw when I excelled in areas I was only marginally interested in while putting my true passions on hold. I chased the balance and perfection that five had once promised me.

This internal tragedy mirrored Freytag's formula just as expected: I fell. I was burning out, running on fumes but pretending I had a full tank. Juggling three jobs, surrounded by a large friend group whose drama consumed me, and facing the fallout of breaking up with my boyfriend of nearly two years, I was collapsing. My grades slipped, deadlines were missed, and I spent sleepless nights staring at the ceiling, wishing I could ask for help, but never daring to admit that I needed it.

Then, at my lowest, help came uninvited. I grew up believing in God, but His love always seemed intangible. In my search for control, I had lost sight of the One who holds everything in His hands. God came into my life not as a distant concept, but as a living, present force. I didn't have to reach for Him; He had always been there, waiting for me to let go. He was there, offering peace for my heart that I spent my life searching for in everything but Jesus Christ.

Five is still my number, but its meaning has changed. It's no longer a manic quest for perfection, but a reminder of balance I've learned to embrace. True balance comes not from controlling everything, but from letting go and trusting in something greater. I strive to walk in grace, knowing that even when I fall short, I am held by something far beyond myself. Five remains my anchor, not in the pursuit of perfection, but in the quiet acceptance of imperfection. After all, even the word 'five' humbly contains just four letters.