Hey Tom! I knew this was going to be a long one, so long that I have decided to make it into a document file, rather than an email because I know I would not have enough room on an email.

Enjoy!

In the simplest of terms, my life has been a mess. A sort of organized mess with some priorities in my life doing better than others, but still quite messy.

I’ll start my journey about discussing why the American healthcare system has failed me. At the end of summer, you know that I got my shoulder checked out and it didn’t look too good. I had decided to take a medical redshirt year because my doctor was convinced that I was going to have to get surgery. My athletic trainer didn’t allow me to swim and I wasn’t able to train in the pool in any way whatsoever. However, in this process, I was dealing with lots of problems with my insurance, the school, and my individual doctor back in Kansas City. Insurance was making canceling further appointments because I didn’t have proper evidence of my injury and the school had lost my medical and physical files, so I had to wait three weeks for them to retrieve them from our old AT who moved to Indiana. At the end of September, I was finally able to get a second MRI and move forward with stuff, or so I thought. My doctor ended up waiting three weeks before getting back with me with my results, and by me, I mean my parents. The doctor and nurse kept on contacting my parents (not me at all) about my results, both were completely contradicting from one another. Yet, the final verdict was that my second MRI showed lots of damage in my bicep tendon, but instead of looking further into it, they said I was completely fine and cleared.

So, I am now at this point that I have no idea what I am doing with my training. The past two weeks I have been trying to get back in the pool, but it really hurts. I have been training with my school’s triathlon and cross country teams because I had an expectation to stay in shape from the swim coaches, It was fun and opened me up to new opportunities in my athletic career, but despite still having my endurance and lots of leg strength, it didn’t really help with my shoulder. My trainer doesn’t know what to do, my parents don’t want me to get a second opinion, and the school’s athletic department just wants me to get another cortisone shot, so I have just been playing it by ear each day on how to train, go about my day, and basically continue on. Since I have been away from my usual training and competing schedule, my new ~athletic~ goal is to just try to get as physically and mentally strong as possible for my next couple of seasons.

I keep on getting questions on rather I am ready to retire from the sport. Just take the ole’ suit and goggles and hang them up, but I really really don’t want to. I still love the sport. I miss the feeling of being in the water or that little boost of motivation when you just finish a hard set, but I have also run into the issue of my team, period. The scariest thing to me was when I was cleared to get back in the pool, I wasn’t excited. I was disappointed because that meant I had to go back to a team that I wasn’t 100% onboard with (and also that I had just wasted two months of time that I could be swimming). I have this urge to transfer and find a college team that I will be more supportive of me, but I’m not sure if that exists. I know my credits are going to have difficulty transferring and I enjoy other parts of Drury. I just feel like this school isn’t a fit for me.

On the more positive side though! I have been keeping myself very busy in order to fill this void that is my current athletic situation. I have been working a job on campus that is allowing me to meet new classmates outside of the team, training with the two other teams and getting involved in their programs, volunteering for good organizations, working at the radio station on campus, and traveling more often. I have never had a break like this away from swimming, but I feel like it was needed. This is the first time in my life that even despite all the other craziness going on, I feel confident in myself and that I am smart enough to figure out things on my own. I finally feel emotionally independent, and that I can rely on just myself rather than have to worry about what I need to know from others. It’s an amazing feeling.

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I was booted out of the Hawaii training trip, but I plan on going to California during the break to work two internships and train with the UCSC swim team. It was expected to be kicked out since I’m not competing this year, but I am excited about the opportunity I made for myself. I hope it all runs smoothly because I am driving there LOL.

And of yeah additionally, triathlon training has been great. I guess I have some sort of “hidden talent” in it and the coach keeps on asking me if I would consider joining the team, so I’ll keep you updated on that.

End of the story, the swimming situation isn’t ideal, but I am finding ways to deal with it. If you have any questions just email me or text me or whatevas. I hope you had a wonderful time reading my word vomit :).

I miss you!