

Jennifer Mintzer
Interview Story

One solitary event can impact a lifetime. Jen Young, a 21-year-old junior at Ursinus College, knows this all too well. One of the more traumatic moments in her life came in the eighth grade when her boyfriend was killed in a car accident. Ironically, Young feels that this one incident has changed her for the better.

Young said that this event forced her to come closer to her religion and her spirituality. "I am the person I am today because of what I've been through. The tough times have made me a stronger person," Young said.

Indeed, Young's dorm room reflected this sense of inner peace. No clues of her traumatic past were to be found anywhere. The room of this resident assistant was exceptionally cheery. Pictures of Young acting goofy with her friends were scattered throughout the room. Young's collection of penguin posters and stuffed animals filled the room with a sense of whimsy. Sweet smelling candles and several animated Disney movies sat on her shelf.

Amidst all of these cheerful decorations, Young blended right in. Running a hand casually through her dirty-blonde, shoulder-length hair, this petite psychology major appeared to be quite perky. She sat on her futon in a relaxed manner with a pleasant look on her face. The occasional knock at the door did not fluster her for one moment. The big blue eyes of this only child seemed to welcome everyone who came in the room.

Young's clothing seemed to reflect her relaxed mood as well. Her clothing was casual-- jeans and a pastel blue T-shirt. She sported a pair of open-toed suede sandals. The only jewelry she wore was a delicate crucifix necklace. Indeed, everything about Young conveyed a sense of calm. Young, herself, even said that she feels at peace at this point in her life.

Young credits this newfound peace to her faith in God. "I went through hell when Chris (her boyfriend) died. I thought about it every day, wondering 'Why did it have to be Chris?'"

Young said. She said that she eventually turned inward for the answers, and this tragedy led her to have a stronger relationship with God. Ever since this experience, Young has wanted to become a Christian counselor.

Young said that she believes her inward journey has also been a factor that led her to choose Ursinus. "I knew I wanted a place that was small and had a homey feel. I didn't want to feel lost," Young said.

She thinks that she ultimately chose Ursinus because of its size and because it was only three hours away from her home in Selinsgrove, Pa. "I could get home if I needed to, but it was still far enough away to feel like I was living on my own," she said. Young also said that the Ursinus campus gave her a good feeling because it reminded her of Susquehanna College which is only minutes away from where she grew up.

Young has already decided where she wants to go for graduate school and, not surprisingly, her choice yet again reflects her quest for tranquility. Ideally, Young said she wishes to enroll in a Ph.D. program for psychology at Arizona State University in Tempe. "Even if I don't get in there, I'm just going to move to Arizona anyway. It is so beautiful and serene out there," Young said.

Young first discovered the beauty of Arizona on one of the many trips she made across the country with her current boyfriend of five years, Will. On one trip, the couple drove out to Montana, proceeded up into Canada and then came down through Washington. They continued south until they reached Arizona. Young said that she has enjoyed these journeys immensely and that the natural beauty of the land made the long hours in the car bearable.

Another passion which provides relaxation for Young is craftwork. "If I don't succeed in psychology I would like to do crafts or something with interior design or flower arrangements," Young said.

"Not everything I do is so tame," Young said. "I like to do crazy things, but most people don't see that side of me," she said. She and her boyfriend once flew to Las Vegas for

the weekend on the spur of the moment, for instance. "We just did it to be crazy. We had no plans whatsoever to elope," she said.

Young said that she feels as if she has reached a turning point in her life, and she is ready to fully embrace life. "I feel like this is the time when I have the most opportunity to do things. I feel different than I've ever felt," Young said.