Through months of exploration, confusion, struggle and eventually accomplishment I finished my capstone. The main focus of my capstone is expression. I sought out to find ways to express feelings through art, specifically photography. Oftentimes expressing feelings can be hard and visually expressing them is even harder. So I decided to tell the subjects of my project to write out exactly how they felt and what they wanted to say. I had them design a shirt with the words they felt needed to come out, photographed them and then interviewed them.

Choosing this project wasn't easy and I knew it wouldn't be from the start. I originally had an abundance of ideas, many which weren't feasible with the time or equipment I had. So, I was forced to narrow it down. As time went on I narrowed it down some more, and then some more until I had one great idea. That idea wasn't my capstone. I couldn't start it. I knew I wanted to do what I did as my capstone because the second I thought of it, I felt like I needed to act on it. While the other project would've been great and interactive it didn't pull me away from things like this one did, this project pushed me to be proactive.

So, with the drive I found in this idea, I started to work. My inquiry was done. I knew what I was looking to accomplish and what story I wanted to tell. But, I didn't quite know how to apply this motivation. My research consisted of mostly camera techniques, examples of mixed media and a lot of studying different photographers. On some of the photos I wanted color and pop and others I wanted it to be dull, some I didn't want color at all. I looked at a lot of older photographers and some from the current time period. I researched Davide Sorennti, a photographer from Italy who died at a young age, Jasiah Powers a photographer based out of NYC and plenty more.

When working as a photographer it's almost harder to work alone than with others. Whether I'm outside observing or photographing someone directly, collaboration is almost always a part of photography, especially for myself. Working with like minded people on this project was definitely a step in the right direction creatively. Getting the chance to not only use my craft but learn about them and their deeper thoughts and intuition was something I appreciated and took a lot from. That's what capstones should be.

As for presentation and reflection I initially thought they'd be the least complicated aspect of this project. Similar to most of my capstone I was completely off the mark with that assumption. I didn't take the time to think about how I'd present my photos. Whether I'd format them digitally, print them out or try something different in general. I think I made the right decision with my presentation. It's simple, not trying too hard to be outside of the box, but still pushes the boundaries I wanted to push and provokes the audience to think.

When reflecting on my project and what could've been or couldn't have, I'm not disappointed or upset with how it turned out nor am I so incredibly proud of myself. I could have put more effort and time into the photos itself and interviewed more people but I think eventually it would've become watered down and hard to catch somebody's eye. It's a hard balance when it comes to the arts and engaging an audience. Not everyone is going to get it, or appreciate it or feel the need to do either. So, as I reflect on the art I've created or the photos I take, I try not to think from the audience's perspective too much. While I appreciate that there are people viewing what I create, I think this project has taught me how to appreciate something by myself, whether or not others like it isn't as important as it was before this capstone.

Starting my project was the hardest part. Working with a deadline so far in advance and having what seemed like an abundance of time slowed down the process of working for me. It

wasn't really the most step by step process. There were a lot of ups, downs and plateaus. The difficulty starting really derived from my faulty planning process. It can be very frustrating when collaborating with people because of the difference in schedules, weather when shooting outside or just not feeling like it. I struggled with that a lot. Some days I just didn't feel like it but I eventually came around and learned through that feeling of idleness. I then started to really turn this idea into reality. I planned shoots, pitched my concept to the subjects and started to work. At times shooting these photos felt too easy. Through that time I questioned myself and the character of my project. I'm so used to feeling obligated to work for school, feeling like I was working for myself made it feel freeing, it wasn't easy, it was fulfilling.

Throughout the process of my capstone I wanted to reach out for help, look for resources but also had trouble doing so. I sort of adopted this bunker mentality, not letting anybody in or being able to ask for help. That was one of the biggest setbacks in the process of my project. I'm still trying to figure out how to make myself vulnerable and express my struggle but it's not easy. Especially when it comes to something like an idea of mine. A lot of the time expressing them verbally is what sets me back so much. I suck at explaining my ideas or visions without acting on them. I've learned that pieces of the process like storyboard or script writing will really help me in the future and the field I'm going into.

Through stress, triumph, creativity, connection and expression I finished my capstone. I'm proud of a lot but I'd say what I'm most proud of is my willingness to fail and keep going. Originally I anticipated a completely different process, one starting earlier, working with video, actors and the whole nine yards but that didn't happen. Although it didn't work out I'm proud I finished on time, with something I can look at and feel accomplished towards. I hope this project

pushes people to express themselves outwardly, I hope it inspires others and I'm proud that it inspires me.