

Living alone offers a chance to reflect

Alone, on my own.

It was a year of change, of growth, but most of all, loneliness.

At 22, moving to Alberta from Montreal seemed like a daunting but exciting adventure. My friend, Melanie, had asked me if I wanted to go to Banff after we had graduated from university in December 1994. We were hoping to find jobs to sustain us while we searched for employment in our respective fields; Melanie had a B.A. in geography and I graduated with a B.A. in journalism and communication studies. Leaving our friends and family behind, we set off to a new life in the Rockies.

Melanie was lucky; she found a job as a housekeeper within three weeks of our arrival. I, on the other hand, continued to search for the next three months. Fortunately, I became a nanny for one of Banff's reporters and was

hired as stage manager for Precipice Theatre Society's production, *Nature Bats Last*.

But then Melanie got a job treeplanting in Prince George, B.C., and I would have to learn to really be on my own. I had relied on her for support and the familiarity of our friendship. Even though I had made new friends in Banff, I was scared of my uncertain future, since the job as stage manager was only a contract for the summer.

As *Nature Bats Last* toured northern Alberta through the summer months, my apprehension grew and my self-confidence diminished. When I visited my parents after the tour was over, I had a choice to remain in Montreal but I chose to go back to Banff and stick it out, even though I only had myself to really depend on.

A career opportunity came up and I had to move once again for a job as a reporter in Slave

Lake. I knew no one in the community of 6,000 people and for the first few months, I had to fight off the loneliness that overcame me.

This past year taught me more about myself and to like myself for who I am. Our society usually frowns upon people going places by themselves. I became more confident by going to movies by myself, eating in restaurants alone and enjoying long nature walks without anything else besides my own thoughts. When you are alone, it gives you a chance to reflect upon your life as well as an opportunity to grow.

Learning to live with myself has been a turning point in my life.

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