

**S**o, just exactly who am I? I am a hard worker who could also win medals for my amazing ability at procrastination. I favor compassion over righteousness, and am addicted to Instant Messenger. I love James Taylor and the Dave Matthews Band, especially when Dave sings, "You wear nothing but you wear it so well." I want the best education I can get and want to continue learning throughout life. I wish I could understand people better, know what makes them laugh, cry, love, and hate. I am Pete Sampras' biggest fan. I would rather

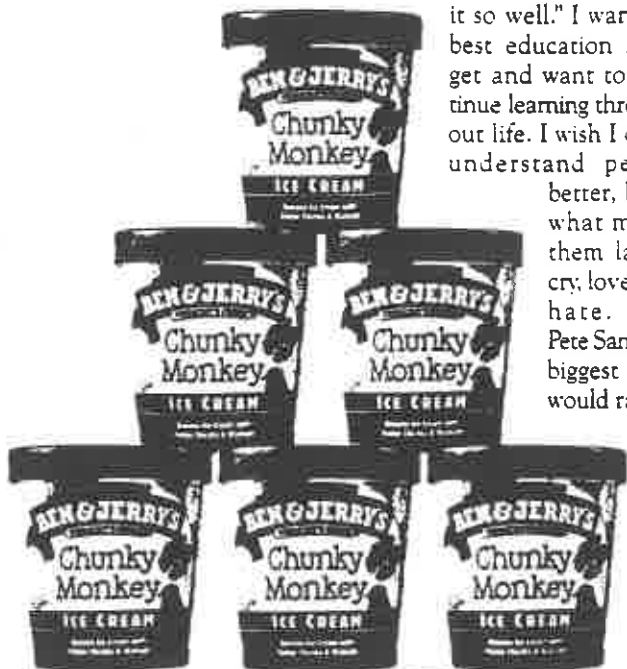
be seen as faithful than Christian. I love deeply and honestly and I hate jealousy, although I have been jealous a time or two. I crave Ben & Jerry's Chunky Monkey ice cream like some heroin addicts crave their next hit. I wish I'd been eighteen in 1969. I love to dream big, to talk, and to sleep. Most importantly, I want to go to college.

What situations have influenced me? First, I have never met my father. I don't know the color of his eyes, the smell of his cologne, or the reflections in his laughter. I once felt part of me was missing along with the missing knowledge of this man. However, I realize now that the person I am is complete and has been shaped by other people in my life who have treated me better than I could have ever deserved.

Also, I am poor. Although most people would rather die than not have money, being poor has taught me the value of a dollar. I know what it is like when the rent can not be paid or the electricity has been cut off. I also know what it is like to depend on the kindness of family, even to the point where one's pride is trampled upon and eventually pushed aside.

My life has been harder than many of my peers', but I have been given so many blessings. I value my intellect and personality. I value my faults. My only hope is for opportunity.

—Jennifer Koontz '04  
Moorestville, North Carolina



As I belly-danced with her at the nightclub on our first evening in Ankara, I knew I had made the right decision. But when my friends discovered that I would be going to Turkey with her for a week and a half, they told me I was being ridiculous. They couldn't believe I would be spending more than a week traveling with an older woman, even though they knew how much I liked her. I considered their warnings, but in the end ignored them. I had really been looking forward to the trip, and nothing was going to stop me from going with her.

As it turned out, those ten days I spent in Turkey with my grandmother last summer were some of the most special of my life. I was able to visit the country of her birth and spend time with someone who has meant so much to me over the years. My grandmother has been a crucial figure in my life, both as a role model and as a friend....Though I may never be as perpetually optimistic as she, or may never have the same incredible zest for life that she has, I at least have a wonderful role model. To me, she has the spirit of a teenager, even though she still often confuses Michael Jordan and Michael Jackson.

—Eric Weinberger '04  
Waban, Massachusetts

