



I Decided to Live as Me

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Mia sat curled up on her sofa late at night, the glowing screen of her phone casting light on her tired eyes. She scrolled through endless feeds of peers achieving perfect careers, spotless apartments, and flawless lives, while her own cup of chamomile tea sat forgotten and cold. A quiet weight pressed on her chest, whisper-asking why she felt so far behind.



Standing before her bathroom mirror the next morning, Mia saw herself surrounded by invisible, floating sticky notes of society's endless expectations. She was tired of carrying standards that never belonged to her in the first place. With a soft sigh, she reached out to symbolically wipe the foggy glass clear.



In her sun-dappled living room, Mia gently closed her laptop and set her phone inside a wooden drawer. She wrapped herself in a thick knitted blanket, allowing the stillness of the room to wrap around her like a warm hug. For the first time in months, she decided to stop running a race she never asked to join.



Mia took a solitary stroll through the vibrant neighborhood park, watching autumn leaves drift lazily to the ground. She realized that the trees were in no hurry to bloom out of season, and neither was she. Everyone around her had their own unseen struggles and quiet victories, moving to a rhythm entirely their own.



In her cozy kitchen, Mia attempted to bake a loaf of bread, which ended up delightfully lopsided and slightly crisp around the edges. Instead of feeling frustrated, she let out a genuine laugh and cut a warm slice anyway. She learned that perfection was an exhausting myth, but messiness could taste remarkably sweet.



Sitting by her rain-streaked window, Mia practiced the quiet power of saying a gentle 'no' to demands that drained her spirit. She poured her energy into a steaming mug of cocoa and a well-worn book instead. Setting boundaries was not selfish; it was making space for her own peace of mind.



With a fountain pen and a fresh notebook, Mia began writing a new kind of to-do list centered on mental wellness. Her goals were simple: soak in morning sunlight, forgive past missteps, wear cozy socks, and breathe deeply. This was her personal manifesto for authentic living.



On her sunny windowsill, Mia tended to a small potted pothos plant, carefully wiping dust off its shiny green leaves. Nurturing something small reminded her of how patience and consistent warmth help quiet things grow. She felt a peaceful grounding root itself within her own heart.



Later that evening, Mia shared a simple, rustic dinner of soup and bread with a close friend in her candlelit kitchen. There was no need to put on a mask or boast about accomplishments; they laughed over spilled water and honest conversations. She cherished the comfort of being completely, unapologetically real.



Walking down the sunlit street the following morning, Mia wore her favorite yellow sweater and carried her head high with a gentle, steady confidence. She no longer needed validation from the crowd to feel complete. She had finally decided to live as herself, and that was more than enough.