Reflecting on 2017, & 2018 goals

I have been umming and arhing about whether to write a post reflecting on 2017 and making goals for 2018. While reading other people's posts, I have been amazed by the awesome things they have done and achieved in the past year, and the great things they hope for and plan to do in 2018. And to be honest, as happy as I am for everyone, it's been a not so welcome reminder of the things I haven't achieved and can not do because of my bad health. I have read about accomplishments that haven't just been small ones but big ones like "I got the job I've always wanted", "I travelled to several different countries", "I had my first child", "I finished writing my book", or "I moved into my own place."

I felt like I was scratching the bottom of the barrel to think of anything remotely similar!! The buzz that comes with a new year has been hard for me to deal with over the past few years because everyone else's excitement makes me wonder what I am doing and where I am going. That being said, I finally decided that writing my thoughts down, reflecting, hoping and planning might not be a bad thing! So, here goes…!

University

I study a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major of Professional and Creative Writing. I do this part time (two subjects a semester) as it takes a lot of my limited energy to keep up with classes and study. However, in semester one I did three subjects because I was given credit for five subjects from previous study and this meant I have an odd number of subjects required over the whole course. It was a struggle but with lots of help from my mum with things like cooking, driving and supportive hugs, I managed! And I am pleased to say I ended the semester with two high distinctions and a credit overall.

Semester two was a real toughy. As I talked about in my life update

post, I was in a lot of pain for most of the semester with multiple badly broken ribs, and had to deal with many medical tests, new specialist appointments, a new diagnosis, and symptoms due to medication changes. At the beginning of the semester, I seriously contemplated only doing one subject, but having pushed through three subjects in the previous semester it was not something I really wanted to do! So I did two and somehow I got two distinctions! So despite having said I was at a loss to think of accomplishments in 2017, I think **getting through university and doing well** is on the top of the list.

My course has been changed unexpectedly and unfortunately there have been quite a few subjects that I was looking forward to dropped as of 2018. I was really upset by this but I have to remember how privileged I am that I have the opportunity to study at all, so I am determined to see how it goes and **keep working hard** in 2018.

Health

As I've mentioned, 2017 saw more changes to my health. Over the past few years, it has constantly changed and I am never not trialling medications, seeing specialists, doing tests or experiencing new symptoms. It is just part of it and I deal with it. I plan to continue to be as **positive and strong** about it all again in 2018.
In 2017, I again dealt with some people in my life not taking the time to understand what it is like for me and passing judgement or showing frustration towards me. I absolutely understand it is hard to fathom how someone who "looks good" can do some things but can't do other things, or can do something one day and then can't do that same thing another day. In 2018, I need to be strong when this happens and I also need to try not to be so taken aback, disappointed or angry that I don't **take the opportunity** to try to help them understand. At the same time, I need to protect myself and not spend my limited energy on people who don't want to understand.

Travel dreams

Over the past few years I have tried to ignore my cravings for travel

because it has been unrealistic financially and health wise. As soon as someone's photos of an overseas trip popped up or I came across descriptions of great countries, I quickly changed what I was looking at. But I am realising that travel is something I can't forget or not aim for, so this year I am going to **allow myselfto think about it** and take note of a few places, both overseas and in Australia, that I want to visit at some point in my life. My family and I made trips to the nearby coast in 2017, which I love, and we do plan one or two more this year, so there is that to look forward to too.

Family

I am constantly grateful for my family and 2017 was no different. My mum in particular is always amazing. In 2018 I hope to **not have to cause her so much stress and exhaustion**! Fingers crossed!

Monthly goals

I watched a TED talk the other day that focused on the concept of making monthly goals rather than big resolutions for the year that are harder to grasp and stick to. I like this idea so I have decided to do a post at the beginning of each month with **goals that I want to achieve for the month** and a wrap up of the previous month. I will pop up a post with January's goals today; despite being in the second week of the month, there is still plenty of time to jump in!

2017 was tough but I got through it! In 2018 I want to find things I can try or change and after 12 months of my new monthly goals series, I hope I end the year with more of a feeling of achievement and hope than I did in 2017. Having chronic illness definitely makes it difficult to plan or dream but I am determined to not ever let it define me. It's hard not to feel like you're completely stuck in a rut or to worry about other people's judgements, but like everyone, I need to keep going and do things that make me happy.

What are your hopes for 2018? Have you made any resolutions or goals? I would love to read them below in the comments. And please tell me some of the things you did in 2017 that made you happy or proud. I hope you are having the most amazing start to 2018!