

NETWORKING

Pressure from my parents wasn't anything new. In my family, you either had to be a doctor, a lawyer or have a PHD to be truly considered worthy. In an effort to please my mother, and to pursue something that interested me, I decided to major in pre-physical therapy. After completing my bachelors degree I would try to get into a graduate school or medical school and pursue a career as a physical therapist. My goal was to become a team physical therapist for a sports team. My career plan was premature but my family was pleased with my efforts.

When school started in January, I was looking forward to the new semester. I was excited about having a major and looking forward to networking with some of the Beta's around campus.

My first pre-physical therapy course was Human Physiology. Human Physiology had a reputation around campus as being a tough course. The course was taught in a large auditorium lecture style, which pretty much limited group interaction and placed the bulk of the learning on the student.

In the fourth row, in the fourth seat, sat a tall light golden brown skinned girl with perfect straight chestnut brown hair. This girl was not a regular girl, she was a Beta. I would stare at her as she glided into class carrying her purple and teal Beta satchel bag. I would watch her take notes. I studied her every move. Her pointy nose. Her perfectly manicured nails. Her crisp white gym shows. She appeared to be a living example of perfection.

At home at night, I would think about her. I would wonder what she looked like when she first woke up in the morning or after a bout of diarrhea. Could anyone be so perfect?

I paid more attention to her than the teacher. Sometimes I would look at her and think, "That could be me." I would picture myself walking across campus in my purple Beta Gamma Psi jacket, with my matching purple Beta bag. I would be the envy of women everywhere. Somewhere there would be people wanting to be like me.

All of my Beta fantasizing really hurt my physiology grade. By mid-term, my grade was a low C minus. The teacher suggested that all of us who were in danger of not passing the course with a satisfactory grade attend study groups and tutoring sessions with his graduate assistant. Of course, I signed up. I couldn't risk getting a C or D and having my G.P.A. drop so low that I wouldn't be able to pledge Beta.

The first study group was held on a Wednesday afternoon at 4:30. I had to go through a million changes with my swim coach just to make the provision to leave practice early to attend the study group. I could tell that he was itching for some reason to cut me

from the team. I didn't really care, but I still wanted to be on the team.

I made it to the study group 15 minutes late and I looked a mess. I had taken my braids down and my curly hair was piled on top of my hair in a sloppy ponytail. I was wearing a maroon Carver Swim Team tee-shirt. I walked into the classroom. There were seven other students sitting at a table.

"He's not here yet. We have decided to just quiz each other on a few of the harder items from the mid-term," a guy named Chad said to me. I remembered him because he was a resident assistant that I met during orientation. Much to my surprise and chagrin, the Beta girl was there. She was so pretty and seemed to pay attention so well—and after all she was a member of Beta Gamma Psi, the best of the best, and she was in danger of failing Human Physiology.

We were in a small setting so I didn't want to stare at her. I felt so uncomfortable. I had never been in such close quarters with another Beta on campus. Gosh—she sees me here, what if she thinks that I have bad grades?

We took turns reading questions. The informal study session was fun and informative. None of us really knew each other, and we talked about how hard the teacher was. Then, she spoke to me.

"Are you on the swim team?" she asked. I was so nervous.

"Yeah, I'm on the swim team," I said.

"Do you like it? One of my sorors was going to try out for the swim team this year but she said the new coach had an attitude problem."

"Yeah he does," I chuckled.

We chit chatted for a few minutes. She seemed nice. I tried to look past the beauty and the Beta to look at her as my equal, but it was hard. I learned that her name was Cassidy. She was 20 years old and she was a junior—but she wasn't graduating any time soon because she had just switched majors. She had previously majored in computer science but she had recently switched to pre-med.

After the study session, I was on cloud nine. I kept thinking to myself.

"I met a Beta, I met a Beta, she's cool, and she's my friend." I was so naïve.

As the semester progressed, I continued to see Cassidy twice a week in study sessions. After one class in the month of March, she handed me a purple flyer. I knew what it was, because I had seen them plastered around campus.

"Hey, my sororities week is next week and we have a lot going on. We would love for you to come out and support our events."

"Oh sure," I said gripping the flyer, trying not to look too excited.

Every week during the school semester was designated as a particular sorority or fraternities week. During their designated week, the organization held events open to the public and interested parties.

I was thrilled. For some reason, I took Cassidy handing me the flyer as personal invitation to me. Me, Eva Perkins, the Beta's wanted me at their events.