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Being a light to your community and sisterhood carries a lot of weight and responsibility, even if the efforts go unrecognized. We are all constantly seeking inspiration and encouragement, whether consciously or unconsciously, and it takes strength to step up and volunteer to fill that role. Being and reflecting light into your environment can look different based upon your role, and I take that very seriously.

As a member of my chapter's Executive Council, part of being that light means leading with grace. I get called upon to make hard decisions and help lead the chapter, meaning there are going to be others looking to me for guidance in tough situations. While discipline is essential, I find it imperative that forgiveness and understanding be extended, as well as the willingness to recognize that we are all human and deserve to have the space to try, mess up, and be supported as we try again. I know personally, without such grace and light, I would not be the person I am today, and I am all the better for those who permitted me the space to try again.

Being a light can manifest in other ways, and I seek to do so academically as the classroom is such an important aspect of my college community. One of my greatest lessons in life is that your grades and academic accolades should not define you, but you should also seek to prevent your academics from potentially hindering future opportunities and success. I have internalized this and brought it into my encounters with others who are struggling and need support in the face of academic struggles. Academic validation is a slippery slope, especially at the higher levels, and I find that people are often looking for empathy and encouragement when they are struggling, meaning the best way I can serve them is to be a supportive, listening ear. Being a light is often circumstantial, and I believe that applying empathy and showing a willingness to be involved with other's lives is crucial.

Additionally, I believe one of the biggest components of being a positive figure is to do so behind the scenes. While it's okay to share your accomplishments, it means more to others when they see how willing you are to help in small ways that may never be recognized. I find myself making it a priority to help in small ways like assisting a friend with a presentation or wiping down the counters in the kitchen. Neither seem astronomically important, however, these small actions compound over time. While it may be easier to be the brightest light, shining so everyone can see, it is often the light that burns consistently, always there for others, that does the most good.