I’m going to take this slow in writing, just to make sure that everything is carefully written and I don’t miss anything, so I’m sorry if this is long. Also it’s in a list format, because that’s easiest for me, and, let’s face it, I just like lists because they make me feel organized. And I promise, I *promise*, that what I say here is not me trying to make excuses, I *promise,* I am genuinely, legitimately trying to answer you as respectfully and as carefully as I can, and with as much care as you took to reply to me.

1. *“Not once did you offer the solution of meeting at Grey’s, not once. I was the one who brought up going to Grey’s, several times, because in all of our entire conversations, you either didn’t acknowledge it, or you became evasive and distant (which I now know is because you felt it was strange).”*First off is the basic premise of: this is entirely, 100%, a facet of my own personality. There was never any question in my mind that if I couldn’t make it up for your birthday, that we could meet up at Grey’s, and there was never any desire for it to be, “if I didn’t go to Sam’s, I’d just forget everything and go to Grey’s by myself, see you whenever Sam,” which is what you seem to be thinking that I’d do, that I was planning on doing. If I seemed distant or evasive, I wasn’t doing it purposefully, I never have, I swear it. I’ve said before, my mind doesn’t work the same way.

*“I get that you were trying to surprise me, but why not say, but hey, we can still meet up to Grey’s or in Toronto together! You’re invited too!”*This is another 100%, but it’s 100% my fault, because I assumed that if it didn’t work out going to your place first, that we’d do the same thing we did last year, because last year we had a great time and I thought we had already decided to do a similar thing this year. Except this was very hypocritical of me, because I always tell you not to just assume things and then I completely did it here, which is absolutely on me, and absolutely something I should have considered, and I didn’t. So I am truly sorry that I didn’t make this clearer, that I just assumed, because this is absolutely something that I did wrong; I was entirely a hypocritical assumer here, and Mom always said that assuming things “makes an ‘ass’ out of ‘u and me’ ”, and the fact that I could have kept things from going south is something that I am ashamed of here, something I am disappointed in myself for.
2. *“You said I became distant, bitter, wary, cold and irritated and that’s just not true, Mandy, you are putting feelings on me that just weren’t there and nowhere did I suggest that you weren’t trying hard enough.”*I’ve said before, and I’ll say it again – I will never tell someone how to feel, or that they shouldn’t feel a certain way, people are absolutely allowed to feel what they feel. This is entirely me, reading the tone of the texts and IMs, and taking what I *thought* was the emotions from it, whether I was right or wrong (which it seems to be the latter). And you’re completely right, it’s very hard to convey tone over texts; this wasn’t so much assuming it was as me observing, and thinking that things were a certain way. However, if I misread the tone, then I apologize for that.

But with regard to the “not suggesting I wasn’t trying hard enough,” maybe not in so many words, but being told that *“I sure as hell am not making any promises to you”* or saying that I am *“blowing you off for someone else;”* that read a lot to me as *“you’re not taking any effort to do this for me.”* And again, it’s entirely what I took from the tone of the text, and the words used.
3. *“It just hurts me so much that you would twist the situation like that, and write that I was accusing you of not making more of an effort, that I was cold and irritated, that I was anything more than just trying to make sense of everything. The majority of the conversation happened in ten minutes, Mandy, I was doing my best.  You left me alone and confused and hurt and maybe you were able to get to sleep that night, but I wasn’t.”*Again, I have never tried to twist anything to make myself look better or anything like that. And this goes both ways – I was also doing my best, I sincerely was. I was also trying to make sense of everything, which is why I went off, trying to breathe, alone and confused. We were both trying to figure things out, in different ways. Your mind works entirely differently from my mind, but it doesn’t mean either of us are wrong in our ways of thinking, just that we react to things in a different way.
4. *“Maybe planning Grey’s birthday seemed strange, but you had still said nothing on the subject and skirted around it when I asked, when I tried to give you a way to tell me what you weren’t telling me but you didn’t so I assumed there was something else you weren’t telling me, some other surprise I was going to find out. It isn’t right to assume but it wouldn't be the first time you waited until the last minute to tell me something, Mandy, especially when it involves doing things together or other people.”*

Again, what I said above. I have never purposefully done anything to skirt around, my mind *literally* does not do that on purpose, *it just happens.* I know you said that you think things through a thousand times in a minute, but I don’t, and it’s *not that I don’t care because that is incredibly far from the truth.* Your anxiety makes you remember, mine makes me forget, and sometimes I don’t even think about things until the very last second and then I’m like “WAIT OH BY THE WAY.” But it never, ever, *ever* means that I am purposefully trying to hide things, that I’m being deceitful, or purposefully evasive, or skirting around things trying to pretend. I’ve been this way my entire life, and paired with my absolutely and admittedly shitty communication skills, it makes for a very complicated set of things happening and a very shitty time remembering to do my homework until the very last second during school. This isn’t an excuse, but an explanation, because I know that my head doesn’t allow me to always remember that other people think differently from me and vice versa.

And I absolutely think that I have gone about things the wrong way, because I *should* be able to talk with you about everyone and everything, and asked you how you felt, I assumed when I shouldn’t have. I don’t disagree that sometimes my method of doing things is absolutely backwards; but if you think that I purposefully don’t tell you things until the last minute, then I’m very sorry, because it’s never been that way. This is one of those aspects of me that mom was always frustrated with me about, and you’d think that since near the end I had to remind her four or five times of things, that I would learn to remember things better myself, but I haven’t yet, and that’s a huge issue with me. But it in no way lessens my love for you, or it means that I put everyone else before you, or it means that I think of you as just another casual person, because it’s never been that way. I’ve never once ever just tossed around our friendship like it means nothing, like it’s just another piece of pie. After all that we have been through together, I would hope that both of us would be able to see at least that one singular truth: that neither one of us has ever just treated this friendship like it was nothing, like it wasn’t valuable, like it was just something to throw around.

1. *“I couldn’t understand why it wasn’t as important to you as I made visiting you was to me. I couldn’t accept that you would visit later, because you had suggested that I be the one to visit you again, which hurt to hear because it was going to be me chancing things again, me spending the money, me driving all that way. I couldn’t understand why you got upset at me, why you didn’t offer any other solution for AN.”*

Just because I didn’t explain things properly in no way means that my visiting you wasn’t as important to me as it was to you. I have never once thought of it as unimportant, as just a thing to blow off, and yes, I absolutely realize that I worded things badly, made it come off as something casual that I just waved aside, and that is absolutely because of me and hypocritically assuming things that I shouldn’t have. But I did, actually, suggest that I come up instead and we could ride horses together since it wouldn’t work out for before AN. I do understand that I did suggest that you visit me, and then I realized that you had just done that, that you had just spent the money, so I immediately afterwards said “or I could come up, and we could ride ponies together!” And again, I could have worded it better, I could have explained it better, and this is on me, because rereading it makes me realize just how badly I made it sound in the first place.
2. *“…but it stung that you hadn’t been honest with me from the start, it stung that I had to ask and ask until you would finally tell me and of course, I was wary after that, because I had no idea what you weren’t telling me. You say that you gave me an answer, that you said it was because of your mental health, that you could come up later and spend some one-on-one time but you gave me a sentence Mandy, a sentence and when I tried to offer a solution of me driving to Toronto instead, instead of telling me why, you said that was very kind of me but you offered no further explanation. If you had just said in the beginning, I would have understood, I would have known but I’m not a mind reader, Mandy, I can’t discern what you are saying without you actually saying it, all I can know is that after all this time, I know when you aren’t saying something and that I don’t know what it is and that it hurts.”

“…I shouldn’t have to ask you to tell me straight out Mandy, I shouldn’t have to ask for you to tell me the truth. Can you not imagine how much that would sting, that your best friend would not be honest with you? I didn’t go about it the right way either, I admit that, but I was scared to ask you to be honest, because why wouldn’t you just be honest in the first place…”*Again, what I said in #4 – I have never not been honest with you. I have never once lied to you, or purposefully kept something from you. I one hundred thousand percent understand that I am an absolutely, entirely validated by you, shitty communicator when it comes to actually saying things, but it has never once, ever, been done with a negative intent or a purposeful desire to be dishonest or deceitful.
3. *“…why couldn’t you just accept that I was going to be disappointed, that is all I said, that’s all I said in the beginning, that I understood but I was disappointed. Do you not think I’m allowed to feel that way? That I wouldn’t feel that way? Do you think I would just be immediately fine and want to watch Haikyuu and carry on as nothing had happened? I would have, eventually, but I just needed a minute! Just a minute to take it in and be sad and get over it.”*I never thought you wouldn’t be disappointed; I never was *not* going to accept that you were going to be disappointed, but you’re assuming that I *wasn’t* disappointed. You’re assuming that I wanted to just sit and say everything was A-OK and go back to what we were doing, but that isn’t the case at all. We react to things differently, but neither one of us is wrong in how we feel, just different than each other. When I get sad or disappointed in things, my usual reaction is to try and laugh it off (not in a dismissive *“I don’t care oh well”* way, but just a sort of helpless, sad, *“why can’t things be the way I want”* kind of way), to try and distract myself from feeling crappy by going and doing something happy or silly in contrast.
4. *“…it’s the way you handle it, it’s the way you treat me in these situations, or at least it’s the way I feel I am treated, like you don’t value me or trust me enough to tell me these things even though you expect me to do the same. That doesn’t mean you don’t have good intentions, that you didn't have good intentions or that I think that you don’t. It doesn’t mean that I don’t think you tried. But what it does mean is that there is a serious communication problem here and there was a serious communication issue that night.”*Again, what I said above. I show things and think things differently, but it never means that I have not valued or trusted you as much as I have, as much as I have these past two years, with every part of my heart. If you think that I haven’t absolutely valued and trusted you, that I haven’t tried to do everything that I am capable of to make you happy, then maybe I haven’t shown it enough, but maybe I also *can’t.* I can’t always do the things I want, but this is who I am. I’m a complete mess, a work in progress, but I completely and one hundred percent agree that there is a serious disconnect in our communications lately, and I think a large part of it has to do with just the different mindsets, the different ways that we react to things. I don’t always show what I’m reacting to, maybe I don’t even talk about it, but it doesn’t mean that I don’t feel anything.
5. *“I can’t set aside our fight and take time off and come back to it. I can’t deal with unresolved things with one of the people I love the very most, it’s very hard for me to leave it alone because the hurt doesn’t go away, I can’t put it away, it’s something I feel continuously until something’s resolved and even then it's a hurt that doesn’t go away for a long time. But that is what I wish most that I had had the strength and patience to wait for your response but please understand how hard it was for me, what you left me with.”*

This is what I meant above. I *have* to take a few steps back sometimes to see things differently, to understand things better. I *have* to take that time away to gather my thoughts and to figure out what I want to say and how to say it properly so that I can get what I want to say out, because emotions and tensions are extremely high in the heat of the moment, in the middle of a fight. I *need* that space to figure myself out, and it’s not that I just kick it aside and pretend it doesn’t exist and throw everything on the other person and go “okay here’s everything bye I’m outie.” This weekend was one of the hardest of my life because of Mother’s Day, and I *needed* to focus on that, and the fact that you respected that means so much to me. That is how I deal with things, or how I’ve learned that I need to in order to be stronger, better, kinder, a more patient person. I haven’t always been this way, but I’ve realized lately that taking a step back, taking a breather, stepping away – that’s something that I personally need, and it in no way means that I have purposefully lessened the importance of the issue at hand, that I’m just trying to ignore it. A little distance gives me better perspective, allows me to sort through the mess inside my head, and I’ve learned that I *need* that, because having been a “heat of the moment” person my entire life, I’ve said some truly hurtful and disappointing things in my life, things I am ashamed and embarrassed of – like what started this whole thing in the first place, me not taking the time to consider your feelings and winding up coming off as flippant or uncaring; because even if it wasn’t how I thought it was perceived, it came off that way, and that is something that I have been trying to work on. And I know it was hard for you, I know it’s not how you deal with things, which is why I am very, very proud of you for respecting that it’s how *I* am starting to deal with things and giving me my space, and I appreciate that so much – but I also know that this won’t be the last time that I will need that space. I have to be able to take care of myself before I can take care of others.
6. *“And intentional or not, ignorance isn’t an excuse; you can say you aren’t good at communicating and that you makes mistakes but it doesn’t make the pain other people receive over it any less real or justified or easy to forget.”*But this is the point here – what I said above. We handle things differently, perceive things differently. It goes both ways; this applies to both of us. I’m *not* good at communicating, and while it doesn’t lessen the pain for you, it also doesn’t mean that I can change on a dime. People can’t change unless they want to change, and I absolutely want to change, but it’s a slow process, and I’m going to screw up, I’m going to make mistakes, and this isn’t trying to justify causing someone else pain, because it absolutely doesn’t, it one hundred percent does not justify or excuse it, and I *hate* that it causes pain, I absolutely *hate* that it does, and for *days* after, for a long time after, I sit and wallow and *hate* that I have said or done something to cause someone else pain, because I know that I have no excuse except for my own stupidity, and that’s why I’ve learned that sometimes I *need* to take that step back, take that time away and see things differently, otherwise my instinctive reaction isn’t going to be the one I want it to be, and will make it worse. Because I *don’t* think things through always the way I need to, that’s what causes the pain and the hurt on both sides, and *that’s* what I have been trying to fix. I’ve broken so many things from immediate, instinctive reactions, I don’t want to do that again, to make those same mistakes again, to break even more things.

I never wanted to be perfect, and never expect to be. I will always be a work-in-progress, and you’re not the first person to remind me that other people aren’t mind readers, that I have to actually do my share of the work in order to make communication the two way street it should be, Mom being one of the first to not-so-gently try and brace that thought in my mind.

I never disregarded your hurt, at least not intentionally, and if I have, if I’ve come across as arrogant or trying to act like I’m blameless, I’m truly sorry, because I know for a fact I am not blamless. I never wanted it to be this way, and I certainly never wanted to hurt you in the first place, and for that I am truly, genuinely, achingly sorry, because I have never *not* loved you, or wanted the best for you, even if I go about it completely the wrong way. I have never *not* wanted to fix things, have never *not* wanted to do everything, a thousand percent, what I can to build up this friendship to be what it should be, to be what it can be. I have always wanted to make things right again, and I won’t ever stop trying to make things right again, and as before, nothing in this letter is written with anger or frustration or irritation or upset. The reason I write letters is because I find it so much easier for me to communicate my thoughts when I’ve had time to think about them, and I swear I am trying so hard to communicate better, to express things better, because I don’t want to just go with the moment, I want to be able to make things right in the right way, the way I should.

There is no question of how much I love and care for you, no question that I have valued our friendship as much as I do, even if there are times when you believed it to be different. I have never purposefully wanted you to believe otherwise, so I am terribly sorry that it ever came off that way, that I was the one who instigated this entire mess up in the first place by my ignorance and miscommunication and assuming things I shouldn’t have.

I want you to know that I am always here for you, always, and that I always, always love you, no matter what, no matter the mistakes I make, no matter the screw ups that happen, no matter anything, that fact will never change, not in this lifetime, and I want to fix things desperately; I want to work with you to work through this, that hasn’t changed either.