

Born to Run... or Stay?

The song that changed my life



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“I wanna know if love is wild, babe I wanna know if love is real” I still remember the first time I heard Springsteen sing these lyrics from “Born to Run”. I was backstage at the HSB variety show listening to my disc man. Yes, one of those large devices that you had to actually put a CD in and required batteries, not charging.

My dad had lent me Springsteen’s *Greatest Hits* album so I had something to listen to other than the cheerleaders practicing their cheer for three hours straight. I probably would have listened to Barry Manilow (ew, I know!) for three hours straight to avoid listening to “Ready, ok!”. I’m glad it ended up being Springsteen though! I doubt the Copa Cabana would have changed by life.

“Born to Run” was the first song on the CD and I listened to it on repeat for the entire night. In the last line of the song he claims “tramps like us, baby we were born to run”. It felt like the music was talking directly to my soul. When he said it I felt like he was talking directly to me. And for some reason, Springsteen calling me a tramp didn’t discourage my reaction to this line. Then again... look at that man, I mean really, it’s Springsteen!

I was fifteen years old and longing to be anywhere but my high school in a city that I thought was too small to contain me; a city too small to contain an ant! It made me feel like there was so much out

there for me to experience if I could just escape!

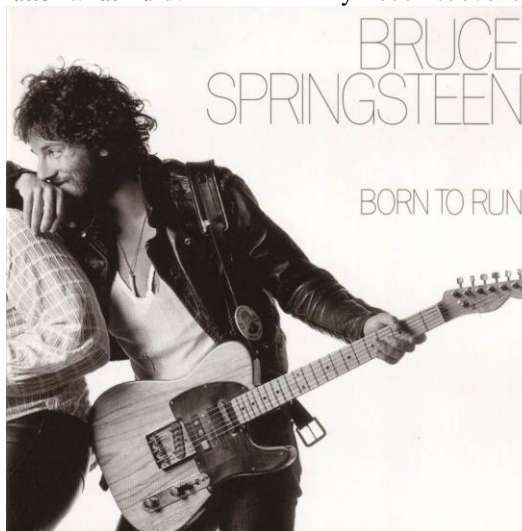
Unfortunately, being fifteen in a close community meant that you couldn’t even escape yourself! You can’t go anywhere without someone knowing you or your parents, which made trying to re-invent yourself very difficult. I thought I would never lose the “good girl” rep, no matter what I did!

Being bad-ass wasn’t my goal, I just wanted to stop being asked if I was the “new girl” in my fourth year of being in that school.

Trying to find my place in high school wasn’t easy, but Bruce made me feel like this was only a temporary situation and that I would be free of the high school world forever in two short years. He obviously didn’t foresee my future career plans that would result in my spending the rest of my life in the high school world.

I was feeling suffocated by a town that knew more about me and what I did than even I did. The line “baby this town rips the bones from your back, it’s a death trap, a suicide track, you’ve got to get out while you’re young” represented everything I was longing for.

“It’s not easy to make mistakes in a town where everyone knows who you are. There are no secrets and there is no such thing as keeping something quiet.”



I wanted to move away from the small town high school out into a world of wonder and opportunity! From that night on, I believed that I was born to run, and needed to run as far as I could away from that town.

As time went by, this song stayed with me as an anthem to survival. If I could just survive whatever task or journey that was expected of me, I would escape the constraints of my life.

My rebel subconscious kept replaying the image of me driving into the sunset on the back of a Harley escaping that small town and the rumors and gossip that develop within it. My rebel subconscious apparently did not realize the horrible helmet hair that accompanies motorcycles!

Once Facebook started, there was no escaping the nosey public who cared more about what I was doing than their own life! Escaping that town was my only option.

Over time, the meaning of the song has changed for me. I no longer long to escape the suffocation of my “small town” but rather I am building my life within this community.

Bruce’s anthem of freedom has taken on a new meaning for me. While I have evolved from my days of longing to escape high school, I am still looking for bigger and better things in my life. I am still born to run. I’ve just realized over the years that I’m not born to run away from something, but rather towards my goals.

I’ll never forget the first time I heard this song. I think about it every time I hear it. It was one of the first songs I learned how to play on guitar and the first song I performed in public. It was the first song that made me feel hope, it was the first time a song changed my life.