

ESSAY PAGE

"A pile of rocks ceases to be a rock when somebody contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral"

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

This quotation inspires me to open the door of possibilities, both within my life and within my art. Many people get trapped in the "rock pile" of daily rituals because their ordinary vision prevents them from seeing the vast potential for "cathedrals", both around them and within themselves. I am not one of those people. Life presents many challenges that I could view as a rock pile; however, I choose to view them with a different perspective. Rock piles are simply opportunities to develop and mature. Every life experience shapes my personality and molds my perceptions of the world. Two such challenges during my junior year helped shape my character and by overcoming them, I am better prepared for college. My first semester was significantly challenged when I missed the entire first grading period due to a series of knee surgeries. My second semester was challenged by an extremely aggressive workload. Together, these events instilled the determination and time management habits necessary for success in college and in life.

My junior year started with me undergoing knee surgery as a result of injuries sustained during eight years of competitive soccer. We planned the surgery so that my recovery would complete without impacting the start of school. Unfortunately, I acquired an infection that led to a second surgery and I missed the first week of school. Less than a month later, complications led to my third surgery in just six months. I was home-bound for six weeks, receiving around the clock intravenous fluids and physical therapy three times a week. I missed a half semester of school where I was taking three Advanced Placement classes and three Honors classes. My teachers sent me class work but I did not have the benefit of classroom instruction or a tutor to learn the materials. Regardless, the school required me to complete all work and tests. I was determined to maintain my grades, so I developed good study habits and taught myself. By the time I was physically able to return to school, I was still on the honor roll with my grades as strong as ever. My determination ensured I continued into the second quarter with no impacts to my advanced courses or class standing.

The second quarter brought challenges in the form of an intense workload. Following recovery from surgery, I resumed my job at a local toy store. I averaged thirty hours per week and also provided baby sitting services for five neighborhood families. I was already taking a strenuous scholastic workload on top of this busy work schedule, but decided to push myself more, and take two classes online. This intense workload was compounded when the teachers added review assignments for the AP testing and final exams. I had to wisely manage my time to avoid impacting my performance at work or school. I learned to organize my priorities and get everything done, earning an A in both online classes, an A in five of my seven primary classes, and a B in each of the two remaining classes. I also received a performance raise at my job. The workload was extremely challenging, but the time management skills I learned will be invaluable in helping me handle my upcoming college curriculum.

With the constant challenges and busy workload of my junior year, determination and time management skills were essential to my scholastic success. These same skills will help me immeasurably in overcoming whatever challenges college and life throw my way.