My whole life I had been told to find and pursue a career that you enjoy because it's important to love what you do rather than being stuck every day in an endless cycle with a job you can't stand. I had tried everything from being a part of a soccer team for six plus years to playing the trumpet in band to trying an art class but in the end nothing felt right. Don't get me wrong I enjoyed these things but they weren't necessarily things I wanted to do the rest of my life. Up until this moment I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and felt that I might never figure it out. It wasn't until I took my Tech 9 class in Junior High where I realized that I enjoyed the concept of STEM and design.

Looking for an elective that was intriguing I stumbled upon Tech 9. The Tech 9 class was like nothing I had ever done before. Each project more exciting than the last. We had designed things from cardboard chairs to hot air balloons to even making our own guitars. This class taught me that there is more to education other than the basics of English, Math, History, and Science. About half way through the year our teacher Mr. Johns had talked to us about the Technology Student Association (TSA) competition. I felt hesitant at first because I had never done anything in design but my friends convinced me to join their team. We started looking over the list of events and eventually Josh, Dawson, and I decided to take part in the CO2 dragster race and the Solar Powered car race, both events based on design and speed.

The three of us spent hours after school each week planning, designing, and testing our solar powered car and CO2 Dragsters. There were many guidelines that we were required to follow such as size, materials, and weight forcing us to build a vehicle that will stand out while remaining within certain requirements. With limited guidance from our teacher we began building and touching up our final product then were off to the competition.

This would be the first competition that Josh Dawson and I would compete in together and it would end up being something I would never forget. We left our hotel and drove to the College of Southern Idaho where the TSA or Technology Student Association was being held. We met up with our teacher Mr. Johns and friends from class that were participating in a competition. Upon making our way to the opening ceremony in the auditorium we were met with a wall of hundreds of students wearing the same blue polo and black pants. We sat there for hours as they introduced us to many people and explained each event.

After being welcomed we walked over to our first event which was the CO2 dragster race. This race was about design and precision making a balsa wood car that met the design requirements but was aerodynamic enough to fly across the track in fractions of a second. We had prepared months in advance for both events that we were participating in and in the moment all of that went away. The judges inspected our dragster making sure it was within the proper requirements for weight, length, and material composition. After all of the dragsters were cleared the race was on. If you win your race you then wait and see how the other dragsters did. The competition is ranked by time and the faster your dragster goes the more likely you are to win overall. The nerves started settling in as I began messing with the spare parts in my pocket, and all of a sudden. 3, 2, 1, the cars were off and within fractions of a second it was over. Our competitors and their families began cheering as I realized we had lost. Our parents standing next to us told us not to worry and to focus on the next competition. Not trying to get discouraged for the months of work we put into our dragster we had to go with the flow and move on to our next competition.

The second competition Josh Dawson and I decided to take part in was the Solar Powered car race. This event is based on the design and functionality of the car. We walked outside to the tennis courts where the event was taking place and began setting up our car. A bit of a breeze and clouds began settling in just before the race which wasn't ideal for the solar powered cars, but we still gave it our all. Our design held up the solar panel at an angle with reflective tinfoil on the sides helping magnify the sun's rays to the panel. Because of our thought in the design our car was the only one that started moving. No other car was able to get enough power, and in that moment, I realized we did it, we had won! Filled with joy and excitement looking back at this moment I realized that I had become fascinated by design and how things work.

If I had never walked into the Tech 9 class, I might have never figured out that I would be so fascinated by design. I appreciate what Mr. Johns had helped me accomplish and without his and my friend’s excitement for this competition I still might not know what I want to do with my life. But that's not the case, I stepped into that class not knowing what I was getting myself into and found a passion for design and an interest in STEM overall. In high school I would decide on pursuing a career in the field of engineering and in college would eventually end up focusing on Civil Engineering. In the end after many attempts at trying to find a career that I would enjoy I had finally found within the concept of design in Civil Engineering.