When I started at Boise State I wasn’t sure what I wanted to study. All throughout high

school I had an aptitude for the sciences, but I had no clue what to focus on. I was going

through the orientation process and felt like I wouldn’t get everything out of the experience if I

didn’t choose quickly. So I made a snap decision and chose civil engineering. I didn’t know

much about it at the time, but it seemed to involve a lot of statics which I knew I enjoyed.

High school had been a breeze for me. I was lucky enough to be able to understand the

material quickly enough that I never had to study. Anytime I had an assignment it was done

before I left school that day. That changed when I got to college. Instead of only having one or

two classes that I felt that I needed to learn from, I now had six. That's when things started to

change for me. There wasn’t enough time for me to complete assignments during class. I

actually had to do work at home. I had been proud of myself for always being a grade A student,

but the cracks in that facade started to slip. I found myself missing assignments for the first time

in my life. Thankfully for me, once again I was lucky enough to understand the material. Enough

so that I continued passing my classes with B’s for that first year. Even though I had passed

those classes, a part of me was panicking. I started telling myself I was a disappointment, I had

so much potential that I was wasting.

The next year things started to decline further. The classes I was in then were starting to

introduce material that I was unfamiliar with. I started doing my homework during lectures of

classes that I deemed unimportant. I thought that if I could finish my homework for those

classes fast, then I was as smart as people told me I was in high school. In doing that however I

began neglecting my “unimportant” classes. The material in classes like civil engineering case

studies and basic english classes just felt like rehashes of stuff I had learned earlier. It didn't hit

me what I was doing until it was too late in the semester to do anything about it. For the first

time in my life I failed a class. That was a massive blow to my ego. I couldn’t help but tell myself

over and over again that I was a failure and a disappointment to my parents. So I hid the failure

from my parents out of an unsubstantiated fear of how they might react. They had always told

me they didn’t care how well I did in school as long as I was trying my best and I knew that I

wasn’t. I didn’t want them to be as disappointed in me as I was in myself. I knew that if I truly put

the time and effort into my work that I wouldn’t have a problem but I couldn’t focus on what felt

like unnecessary busywork at the time.

The following semester was not much better. I had begun that semester in a bad state of

mind. I stopped caring as much about the grades because I was afraid if I really tried to improve

and failed, then I would really reveal how much of a fraud I was. The frequency at which I

submitted assignments became much more sporadic, even in classes which I actually cared

about. My grades began to suffer severely. I tried to pretend like it didn’t bother me, but really I

was falling deeper into a depression. I failed even more classes and finally knew that I could no

longer handle the pressure. I had to tell my parents what had happened and face the

consequences.

I was so terrified of making people disappointed in me that I neglected my mental health

for a long time. Even though my parents had never been anything but loving and supportive, my

mind had twisted it so that I assumed they only had the highest of expectations. The truth was,

the only person that had these expectations was myself. They weren’t mad at me or

disappointed, but worried. They saw how much pressure I was putting on myself to be perfect. I

was paralyzing myself with fear, preventing me from making any real changes to my lifestyle.

Amidst all my mental health problems, the world was hit with a pandemic. So I took my

parents' advice and took some time off school and signed up for therapy. I had been resistant to

the idea at first. It took me having a panic attack in our kitchen to finally agree to give it a try.

While it makes sense in retrospect, I didn’t know at the time that I was suffering from an anxiety

disorder and a mild form of ocd. I had paranoid ideas of what everyone thought of me that my

ocd forced my brain to play on repeat, leading me to withdraw into a depression. I spent a year

working on myself, going to therapy and taking medication to get my mind right. I had my ups

and downs, but I finally found myself ready to go back to school.

Now I find myself in my last year of college. There have been ups and downs, but for the

most part I am doing much better. Unfortunately my depressive period has left me in a situation

where if I fail one more class I will be forced to reconsider my major. But that doesn’t scare me

as much anymore. Even though I slip up once in a while I have confidence in myself to succeed

in the end. I don’t start spiraling at the slightest failure anymore, I keep pressing onwards.

Therapy taught me how to go with the flow, accept my failing and understand that they don’t

define who I am. I am my own greatest critic and I need to give myself a break once in a while.