What do you want to be when you grow up? This question is hard to answer when you started growing up. When you’re a kid it's easy, a firefighter, police officer, president, princess, and other things like that. For me, the two choices were being a cheerleader or a musician. My parents even put me in a dance class as a cheerleader and got me a guitar, which to this day, I still do not know how to play. Then kids start growing up a bit and are asked what they want to do. Some do not know; to others, it is the same and others have a different goal. For me, engineering was my first real answer to the question, and it has not changed.

When I was a kid, I really liked math. I was a grade up from my class, so I knew I wanted to do something with math. My friends wanted me to be like a tutor or teacher since I helped them with problems. However, I did not like talking in front of people, so I knew the teacher option was not happening; tutoring in my mind was like a teacher when I was younger so I didn’t want to do it either.

The second year of middle school comes, and I need to pick my electives. I saw a class called Gateway to Technology, or GTT. It sounded interesting so I wanted to do it. In this class, we were mostly in a computer lab, there was a workshop attached to the lab, but we were not allowed in there. We made designs in Autodesk 360 to make schematics, and we use electronics to create circuits where we had to make so certain tasks, a working stop light was my favorite and the hardest task we had to do. GTT was exactly what it was to me; it showed me other choices I could do in my life, and I had fun. I wanted to keep doing it. So, the next year, I took the class after GTT which was called Pre-engineering.

In pre-engineering, we actually got to use the workshop connected to the lab. In this class, we were given a problem or task for the week, and we had to plan it in the lab and then make it in the workshop. The first thing we had to make was a strength box. It was a box that had to be a cube about 2 inches wide, in length and height, and had to hold our weight for 10 seconds only using wooden sticks, wood glue, and paper. I was the first done with making my cube in class and passed the test. Everyone, even my teacher, stood on my cube, and it made me feel accomplished. We did other individual projects to compete with each other like a flying car that moves on its own, a car with a safety feature to protect an egg, like a seatbelt or airbag, when the car runs into a wall, and a rocket that we launched into the air when we step on a pump. We did one group project, more like a class project, which was to make a Rube Goldberg Machine to ring a bell. I even got an extra project of making a game for fun because I finished many of the projects early that I got to keep. However, none of these were my favorite project.

My favorite project that made me realized I wanted to be an engineer was making a car with a nitrogen canister and racing them with others. For this project, we were given a block of wood with a hole for the nitrogen canister pre-cut into it and were told to make a design. We wanted to be the fastest. I loved this project not because I won, which I didn’t in my race. I loved this project because what I made was not what I designed. I had to change it because I messed up a cut when carving the wood. While making the front of the car, I wanted to make a curved edge around the front to have the airflow nicely with the car. But when I was cutting the front, I pushed too hard, and the cut went into the car in a straight line. I had to curve back out to hit the end mark. However, instead of getting angry or upset, I decided to copy the cut on the other side to equal the first. I was impressed with myself to change my plan then and go with the flow. This project showed me that I can adapt and change if my plan does not go accordingly. My mistake could have even been the reason I lost the race, but I did not care. I enjoyed making the car, even with the mistake, and painting it the way I wanted. From that point, I wanted to be an engineer; I just didn’t know what kind I wanted to be.

In high school, I took a couple of engineering classes that had more electrical engineering and we build out of metal scraps, which I found different, but it did not feel think was I wanted to do. It was kind of fun, but trying to bend the metal the way I wanted it and having to write a lot of code made me not want to continue down that path. I researched all of the types of engineering there are, and I did like construction engineering, but I thought it might be a bit of a narrow field. Since it was part of the civil engineering area, I decided to follow that.