I do not have many close friends. Over a lifetime of mild social anxiety I have become hesitant to trust new people and open up to them. While over the last two years I have been determined to overcome this flaw, it has made a permanent mark on my value system. Above all else in a friendship or relationship I value loyalty. Not the sort of loyalty prescribed by patriotism or otherwise grouping-based pride, but a basic loyalty and dedication to my friends, so long as it is also received in turn.

Whether it is offering my friend your pencil before a math test or helping them studying late into the night for a test I have already prepared for, I have always tried to do my best to be good to those who have shown the same kindness. However, when a group of friends once left me alone on Balboa Island and went for ice-cream instead of looking for me after I was missing for over an hour, I ended those friendships that day.

This belief in loyalty is also what led my passion in student government and Challenge Success, a group of two students and several teachers that went to Stanford during my sophomore year in order to evaluate sources of unnecessary stress and improve student wellbeing. Improving my school and helping it grow become an obsession of mine, and I joined every committee I could, including one that helped design the new science building.