I never thought I would ever be glad to be so bored. But my sophomore year’s winter break was incredibly dull and eventless. There were few times I found myself not watching T.V or listening to music. Though my favorite thing to do was listen to music, because I had been exploring lots of new different types of it.

Listening to music so much in my boredom made me wish to play like these guys I’ve been listening to for all these years. And then the thought crossed my mind; there really is no reason I can’t pick up an instrument and learn how to play. So I went digging through my dad’s closet through dust and dirty socks, until I found a guitar case. I was really excited when I first opened it, I had seen my dad’s old bass guitar before but I had never held it, let alone play it. The smell that hit me in the face when I opened it, it smelled like history. Nobody had touched it in years and years and I was so excited to play it, I was hopeful it wouldn’t be hard but I was willing to learn. The first thing I did was try to play the bass line in the intro of a song I had been listening to a lot.

My first attempt at playing was to do it by ear, and I guess I had just hoped I would be a savant at the bass guitar and it would make sense while I was playing. To nobody’s surprise (including my 15 year old self) this wasn’t the case. Playing open notes, which was just strumming a string without holding a fret down, wasn’t the correct way to play the song I was trying to learn. It was at the point I realized I would probably have to learn how to actually read music.

I opened google and looked up a tab of the song was. When I opened it I had no idea what I was looking it. Numbers, bars, and symbols that all looked like an alien language. I had no idea how to read it, so I had to look up how to read a tab. Then, I had to look up how to read what was actually in the tab. It was a long tedious experience that I stuck to long enough to understand.

So, after learning how to read the tab, I was ready to try again. Actually playing on frets and sounding pretty similar to the song I was trying to play. That was until I got past the first 10 seconds and it started become too fast for me to keep up with. At this point I thought I was just a failure, and there’s no way I could learn this, and there was no point in me even trying. So I gave up on the song and quit.

However, as I kept listening to that kind of music I found more songs I liked and more bass lines I just had to at least try. So, reluctantly, I picked the bass back up, and instead of trying to learn a complex song to start with, I dialed the difficulty back a little bit and learned a less challenging song. After realizing it’s okay to struggle, and as cliche as it sounds, realizing practice did make perfect. I stuck with it long enough I could play the song, and keep up with it’s pace perfectly.

I never thought I’d be so happy to give on something. But because I did I learned a very important lesson, while picking up my absolute favorite hobby. Music.