**Final Paper**

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**Life Line Event**

**Manipulate, move around, and fill in the arrows and textboxes below to graph your 5 life turns. Events should be rated between:-10 (the lowest negative event) and +10 (the highest positive event)**

**(i.e.** -10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 + 8 +9 +10)

Life Turn #3: Returned to college, 2019, +10

Life Turn #5: Received a Job Offer, 2020, +8

Life Turn #1: Got Into College, 2014, +5

**(+)**

Life Even #4: Death of Girlfriends Great-Grandmother, 2020, -8

Life Turn #2: Grandmother’s Death, 2016, -10

**Description of Life Turns**

1. Life Turn #1:

Name of Life Turn: Got Into College

Rating of Life Turn: +5

Summary: Getting into college was one of the first big life turns that I had. I grew up in a small town with a population of about 3,000 people, and my graduating class was only 31 students. At first, I didn’t put much thought about where I wanted to go to college. But, as my senior year was at an end, I found myself in a rush to start applying for a school and taking the ACT. I had never really thought about what I wanted to major in. I lived a sheltered life. My parents never let me go out much, and they didn’t force me to get a job when I was in high school, they provided whatever I needed and wanted. I chose to major in electrical engineering first, because my grandma wanted me to have a fancy job title and make good money. Reality hit me quick for a few reasons. One was that I realized I hated electrical engineering, and I ended up wasting 1.5 years and losing a scholarship before I switched to computer science. Another reason was I found the world wasn’t so nice and soft like my parents made it seem. It was difficult to live in the dorm, and the taillights got stolen off my truck within the first 3 months I was here at NMSU. In all, this experience started to make me see things I had not seen before, and I realized I had to build some thick skin to get through it.

1. Life Turn #2:

Name of Life Turn: Grandmother’s Death

Rating of Life Turn: -10

Summary: This event is the most significant and most negative life turn for me. Even though my grandma sheltered me for so long, and I began to disagree with her a lot once I lived on my own, I loved her very much. She was my mother. I lived with my mom and grandma, but my grandma raised me while my mom was at work. I had gone to college because she wanted me to. Once she died, my life completely fell apart. I began to question why I was in school, because it wasn’t really my choice to be here. I ended up dropping out that semester. I ran out of funds and had to sell most of my belongings. I was very close to losing my apartment and car before I found a job. This was a very dark time for me, but it also helped me find myself. I realized my passion was for computer science, and that I didn’t want to work fast food as a career. I found motivation once more.

Life Turn #3:

Name of Life Turn: Returned to College

Rating of Life Turn: +10

Summary: Returning to college is the greatest positive life turn. I applied and was accepted back to NMSU. I was able to find a new group of friends that shared a similar situation with me. They had both dropped out of school and were returning to finish their degree. This was still a difficult time for me because I had to still work until I was able to receive financial aid again. As time went on and I continued taking my classes, it really kept me motivated. My friends exposed me to more opportunities, and it made me want my degree more than anything else in life.

1. Life Turn #4:

Name of Life Turn: Death of Girlfriend’s Grandmother

Rating of Life Turn: -8

Summary: The death of my girlfriend’s grandmother is my second most negative life turn. My girlfriend and I had a rough start to our relationship. But once I came back to school, it got better. I started to be around her family more and grew to love them. I especially got close to her great grandma. She was 102 years old when she passed. The past couple years of her life, I spent a lot of time with her. She became my grandma as well. I knew she loved me a lot. I was there with her in her final moments. It brought back a lot of memories of my grandma. This event showed me how strong I had to be, because my girlfriend was extremely close to her. It tested me a lot, and I might even say it was as tough as going through my own grandma’s death. I had to take the role of a counselor for my girlfriend, and it’s not been easy.

1. Life Turn #5:

Name of Life Turn: Received a Job Offer

Rating of Life Turn: +8

Summary: My final life turn is my second most positive. This came about a month after my girlfriend’s great grandma passed away. I went to the career fair, but I only had the intention of talking to a local company recruiter. However, my best friend dragged me to a few more tables. One was for Hill AFB. The representative asked if I knew about React programming, to which I answered yes. He instantly scheduled an interview. The next day I went in for the interview, and it was the best interview I’ve ever had. I received an intent to hire. Since then, I’ve been extremely motivated to do well in school. I’ve been doing all I can to learn React and create personal projects. I’m looking very forward to graduating in December.

**Life Turn Reflection**

All these life turns have shaped and influenced my life in many ways. Throughout most of my adult life, I tend to always focus on the negative aspects. As time has passed, I’ve slowly began to see how good life can be, and how much more amazing it is when you start to focus on the positive aspects. Sometimes I do miss living my old sheltered life. Looking back though, it blinded me to so much. I will always love my grandma, but I disagree a lot with how she raised me. She raised me as a spoiled and nervous boy. I got what I wanted, and I would absolutely freak out when something big went wrong. But I still stood with her until the end. Watching her die changed me a lot. I also went through a lot of hardship after she passed. She died about 2 weeks before the semester started. So, by the time the funeral was over and all my family left, I had to go straight back to school. I didn’t really get a chance to mourn, and I feel that had a big influence on my life choices.

I started question all my previous choices, especially going to school. I didn’t feel like I knew my purpose, and I started missing classes and dropped 2 of them. I didn’t show up for my astronomy final and barely passed with a C. I didn’t get advised or sign up for classes the next semester. However, there were some redemptive qualities about this negative life turn. My protective bubble had finally burst, and I was exposed to the harshness of the real world. I was almost lost everything I had at one point. One of the last things I did before I got a job was take out a loan to just pay my bills. I had to sell the custom wheels off my car, my PS4, my Xbox, and even parts from my gaming PC. Once I got to this point, I realized I had to make a change. I got a job, and I enjoyed working there for 2 years. But I realized then that I had more purpose than just making fast food. That’s when I decided to enroll in school again. Once I enrolled in school again, things began to look bright again. I did have to struggle a bit my first semester back. The computer sciences classes I took were difficult, as I hadn’t programmed in about 1.5 years at that point. I had to teach myself programming again.

After a few weeks however, I befriended a couple of new people. They really solidified my passion for computer science. One of them works for ICT, and he showed me a lot of cool things that he knew. We were also able to get each other through our discreet math class. My other friend exposed me to Electronic Caregiver here in Las Cruces. They are a cool company, and I have already had a good interview with them, but I wasn’t hired at that time because they were looking for soon-to-be graduates. Still, he helped shape my career outlook. The next semester, I found a new group of friends because I didn’t have any more classes with my other friends. These 2 other friends have now become my best friends. One of them (that I used for practice in a lot of my assignments) has really helped shape my career choices. She’s had 2 internships with Google, and she’s helped me navigate the through the job application progress many times. She is one of the reasons I stuck with computer science, and she help created one of my most positive life turns. That’s why I feel that my grandma passing has created some of the most redemptive aspects of my life. I got to my lowest point in life at that time, but now in this current time I’m better than I’ve ever been before.

This event has also deeply influenced my academic and career choices. After hitting my low, I realized how important school was for me to get where I wanted to go. I have never been more motivated in my life. This year, I received an intent to hire from Hill AFB in Utah. I was ecstatic to get this offer. Before, I was limiting myself to stay here in Las Cruces. After this offer however, I realized that there’s a whole world of possibility outside of here. It made me start exploring more opportunities. I’m more daring and willing to go out into the world and adventure. I really want to see what the world has to offer.

I feel that my grandma and girlfriend’s grandma have both had an influence on my life. My grandma influenced me to not want to go back to that cushy lifestyle. Looking back, I really can’t believe how sheltered I was back then. I had no idea of the value of money. I just had to ask and eventually I had it. I had to deal with a lot of bullying in school because of it. I also had little work ethic then. I never had a serious job, and high school was very easy for me. It wasn’t until she was gone that I had to build these qualities. But I’m very grateful that I’ve built them now, because they’ve helped me achieve a lot in a short period of time. As for my girlfriend’s great grandma, she influenced me by helping me get close to people again. When I was in my dark state after my grandma passed, I shut myself out from the world. I lived completely alone for the summer. I didn’t really go out or have any contact with many people. I basically shut everyone out. After things started to get better though, I began to spend more time around my girlfriend’s family. It was amazing to see their family dynamics. Her great grandma was the center of their universe. You could always see the love she had for everyone. Even the first time I went to see her, she told me she loved me. I believe that she influenced me to start letting people in again. I think this was in part because I felt the same love from her that my grandma used to have for me. I’m very grateful that I got to spend the time I did with her. It was a truly amazing feeling.

I think the biggest thing from my timeline that informs my future goals would have to be working my fast food job. I have immense respect for all fast food workers after working that job. It wasn’t all bad though. I had a lot of fun working there and met some great people. I only left to focus on school. This job did inform my life calling. Besides making me realize I didn’t want to be a fast food cook or anything culinary for my career, it showed me that I can be a problem-solver. What I mean by this is that I can use my passion for computer science to help solve a lot of problems in the world. For instance, there would be some inconvenience created by the cash register or the order display system. Seeing these issues, I would think about them from a programming standpoint. I realized that I could solve a lot of these problems with some clever programming. Therefore, I see my purpose in life as being a problem solver through computer science. I would like to create small projects that can help people in different ways. Especially people that are often over-looked like those who work in fast food for example.

These events have also affected my interpersonal communication skills. I think the biggest impact I took was in how I handled conflict. During my low point, I would completely shut down during a conflict. I know during this class I found that I was accommodation. Well back then I was basically nothing. On top of everything going on in my life, I didn’t want another conflict. I just completely avoided it and would try and shut it out. This meant that I didn’t even bother to work towards a solution. 100% of the time this made the situation worse for me. Not saying anything or taking anything into consideration is never a good way to handle conflict. I also was not good at reducing extreme emotions. I would always let my feelings get the best of me, and I made a lot of irrational choices because of that. This never ended well either. The regression of my interpersonal skills during this time hurt a lot of aspects of my life. It destroyed some relationships and took away some opportunities I had. Looking back on these events, it’s surprising to see how far I’ve come since then. Whether it’s developing interpersonal skills, or finding positive within all the negative, my life has changed a lot. This change all stems from these life turns I’ve written about today.

**Course Reflection**

This course has changed the way I view my relationships and events in my life in a big way. I think one of my favorite assignments was finding out our conflict resolution style. I knew beforehand that I mainly accommodate people’s interests but seeing it from that survey really solidified it for me. Going forward, I still won’t change the way I handle conflict. I just can’t see myself ever being dominating. I don’t like to put my foot down because I feel I may come off as just plain rude and end up ruining a relationship. However, I will be more wary once I graduate and move onto the professional environment. I need to be careful when using the accommodating style in the workplace. If there is a conflict, even though I want to preserve the relationship, this accommodation can also give a false sense of preservation (McCann, 2017). This could possibly create further issues in the workplace relationship. That’s not something I want to have happen in terms of a career. Another thing I will take away from this course is the internal barriers we have to listening. I feel the barrier I’m most aware of and the guiltiest of is premature judgement. More often than I’d like to admit, I catch myself judging what a speaker is going to say before they have the chance to say it (McCann, 2017). This is a concept I will keep in mind for my future relationships. In my personal experience, I completely misjudge what the speaker is saying. I want to keep this out of my future workplace relationships as much as possible. The last big takeaway I have from this course is also related to listening, and that’s having an agenda. After watching the video, it’s surprising to see how often we have an agenda to listen. When in the workplace, we might be wanted the approval of someone to get a promotion or raise, and this agenda will affect our listening (Brach, 2015). For my future relationships, I plan to block out my agenda, and really focus on being mindful of the speaker and accepting what they have to say with openness. It’s not just these concepts I will take and utilize in the future. All the content of the course has provided a lot of insight for me. I believe there’s not one thing I won’t be able to use to help all my future relationships flourish.

**References**

McCann, V. (2017). *Human relations: The art and science of building effective relationships* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

Brach, T. (2015, August 5). The sacred art of listening. Tara Brach. https://www.tarabrach.com/the-sacred-art-of-listening-2/ (Links to an external site.)