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How to School: 101

Soft bells and piano keys populated my dream, a beautiful meadow filled with gorgeous sunflowers. *Does it get better than this?* I thought to myself, taking in the beauty of nature. Suddenly, I was rudely awakened by my alarm. It echoed the same beautiful serenade that flooded my dream, except I was now sitting in my cold, dark bedroom, juxtaposed by the heat underneath my blankets. As opposed to the cliché of smashing my alarm clock, my phone in this case, I shut off the alarm, and checked the time. *5:30AM*. Seeing this made me consider, did I really want to leave the warm, all-encompassing comfort of my bed to trudge downstairs, eat my breakfast of gruel and whatever else is unfortunate enough to be called breakfast, drive an hour, and battle the cavemen that pollute Dallas-Fort Worth highways?

I really didn't, but on this day, I didn't really have a choice. It was moving day at my first university, Dallas Baptist. Not exactly where I wanted to go to school, but I didn't really care at that point, anywhere was fine. I ate my slop, jumped into my car, and before I knew it; I was staring down the door to my dorm. Of course, they decided to give my dorm the earliest time they had opening, 7:00AM, and of course I wanted to beat my potential roommate there, wanting to get the best bed in the room. Being the early bird yielded the result I wanted, the fabled window bed. Best seat in the house, or dorm, in this case. It wasn't under the air

conditioning/heating vent, so I wouldn't be too hot or cold, and I got to wake up to the meticulously maintained greenery every morning, it was perfect.

All was well until school started. I got to meet my roommate, a chilled-out guy from Houston, probably had at least a foot on me height wise, but was relatively shy. Skipping ahead to my first class; I could already tell there were going to be some issues, it was **mind-numbingly** boring. I mean, seriously; you could drain a pack of Red-Bulls and still snooze your way through the class. This persisted for all my classes, and I quickly found myself playing games on my laptop instead of taking notes. It goes without saying that this routine would land anyone in some hot water, causing my GPA to dip beneath 1.5. Some councilors called me to schedule mandatory meeting about my continued attendance. But, since that was the last week of school, I chose to blow them off, pack my stuff, and go home instead.

In my mind, I entirely blamed the school environment for my attention troubles, that it was 'too religious' (frankly, they were heavy on religion, it is a Baptist school after all), it was my roommate's fault for distracting me (the guy barely talked, said hello, goodbye, good morning, and goodnight), and that I 'just don't fit into a school environment'. However, mental gymnastics will only do so much; eventually, I had to face reality.

This cold slap in the face came in the form of my first semester at Collin, where the exact same cycle of events repeated itself. Wake up, play games in class, go back to sleep. I eventually decided to stop attending halfway through the semester, since I apparently thought I was too good for school. Of course, my parents, who I still live with (because I'm a BUM) were not fans of this approach, telling me that "if [I] wanted to keep living under their roof, [I] have to go to school."

The stakes were high, I had to figure something out, but I was so dejected with college at that point, that I wanted to take a semester away to get my ducks in a row. So, in a somewhat spur of the moment decision, I decided to go to a coding camp taught at Southern Methodist University. Now, this camp wasn't a walk in the park. It was a minimum of 6 hours a day with my butt planted in front of a screen, coding away. But, during that time, something incredible happened; instead of just bumbling around and not paying attention as I normally would, I decided to make an honest, hard effort, but in the end, I completed the program. The completion of the program was only one part of this, however, I had to make numerous changes to my lifestyle in order to complete it, such as getting up at a decent time, eating better, actually creating a timetable of how to best utilize my time, and more.

With these changes made, my confidence through the roof, I decided to take another crack at higher education, leading to where I am today. Almost back where I started, but a year older, and what feels like ten years wiser. The changes I've made should allow me to succeed, granted I take the path of consistency and don't overstretch my capabilities.