Hello, my name is Trevor Lund, and I’m here to talk about myself. I’m a sophomore in Software Engineering, and I’m from Johnston, IA. I am an only child in my family with no pets, so I really spend a lot of time on my own or with my parents. This has caused me to dislike family vacations, especially as a teenager who would like to be independent from his parents. On what seems to be an unrelated note, I like to run. Which is why I brought this water bottle and the story behind it.

My cousin Holly is a Lutheran minister, and while she was in the seminary, she was sent to many different places in order to learn and help out the churches there. My family would often base our family vacations around where she lived, almost exclusively because my mother loves to save money by staying at her house. One of these vacations sent us to Alaska, where we visited Denali National Park, and went camping in Valdez, Alaska. The day we went camping happened to be the 4th of July, my second favorite holiday (The first being April Fool’s Day). My dad and I were walking around the city early in the morning, and we found a poster detailing the 4th of July festivities going on that day in Valdez. Along with the classic events, from parades and fireworks to a boat race, there was a 5K race in about half an hour. Since my cross-country coach wanted me to run on my own during vacations anyway, I went and signed up. When the time for the race arrived, I walked to the start line and was astonished to find maybe 20 people. Most of the 5K races I run have had closer to 1000 people running. So here I am, running a race in a completely different dynamic than usual, passing people frequently. Suddenly I realize I’m leading the race, and there’s only about a quarter of the race left. Unfortunately, as I’m rounding the corner to the home stretch, a slim guy has a stronger kick than I do and ends up passing me for first place. It turns out this guy was a marathon runner who found out about this race in a similar way I did. But for getting second place, I won $50 and this water bottle. Ever since that race, I’ve carried this water bottle nearly everywhere I go, especially track meets. I’ve lost it a few times, but I’ve always found it again.

That race and this water bottle have taught me several things about myself. I’ve realized that nothing is guaranteed. Even if I think I have something in the bag, I have to try hard until the very end, until my goal is assured. And even then it’s not set in stone. I’ve also learned that I can succeed at things I put my mind to, no matter what it is, where I am, or what else is in my life. And finally, I learned that I’m not half bad at running.