

helloFriend

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My upbringing

To get 1,500 words down on paper about myself, there is only one way to start: at the beginning. My childhood and upbringing is very important to explain who I am as a person today. I was born May 11 in the year 1999. I was born in Beaverton, Oregon. I've lived in the Northwest for my entire life, except for one year where I went to school in Arizona at Grand Canyon University. But I am a PNW child all the way. When I was born my parents lived in Tualatin, Oregon and then they moved to Camas, Washington a year later near my first birthday. My parents have lived in the same house in Camas since they moved from Oregon. I lived in that house for 18 years of my life. I visit my parents often so I get to be in that house often and it will always feel like home. Throughout my childhood my parents were always able to provide for me emotionally, spiritually, and physically. I count my blessings because I know for many that is not a familiar upbringing.

I grew up going to church, playing sports, and getting my education at home. I am grateful for every intentional decision my parents made. I take my faith in Christ seriously and consider it the most important aspect of my life. Part of what I believe my faith as a Christian allows is that science and reason is not something I have to avoid. My parents always helped me embrace education and learning as they homeschooled my siblings and I. There is a stigma that a lot of homeschooled students have placed on them. People believe that parents shelter their kids because they're afraid for them. My parents weren't afraid, but were homeschooling because they felt empowered to give us an upbringing and education that they believed would be better than anything a public entity could offer them.

I have 4 siblings and my mom taught all of us. We went to a few different co-ops for homeschool students that helped give us an opportunity to interact with other kids our age as well. I had 2 cousins near my age that lived only a few houses away that were also homeschooled by my aunt and we would spend most of our days with them as well. We were also always interested in sports and competition and our parents kept us in sports throughout our entire childhood. This helped give us that experience of working with groups toward a common goal which I believe sports are instrumental in helping introduce kids to. It also helped us understand that people come from all different walks of life and backgrounds. Whenever I tell people I was homeschooled they always say, "Oh, you don't seem like a homeschooler." I think there is a good reason for this stigma, as I have met plenty of homeschoolers who fit the stigma. But our parents gave us proper socializing by having lots of kids around and I think our personalities were apt at living in that environment. I believe most homeschooled kids end up growing into entirely capable people anyway, so the stigma shouldn't scare parents away from homeschooling.

Overall, I always felt like I was different from everyone else on my sports teams. However, I eventually started taking it as a badge of honor. I knew I didn't care for all of the social happenings and adolescent intertwinings going on between my peers. To this day I avoid drama whenever possible. I always felt that I was able to handle social interactions more maturely than other kids my age and became a little bit of a stoic. When I got to high school I started to really understand who I was and I wouldn't compromise on that. I still played sports like basketball and football, but the drama and politics of high school sports displeased me. So after my freshman year I switched from football to club rugby. Not only did I find the game to be the superior sport to football, I also found that the politics were undone from its club status. If you were a good player, you got to play. It was refreshing to myself and many others former football players looking for alternatives.



Figure 1: My wife and I on our wedding day.

I also attended community college during my junior and senior years of high school through the Running Start program in Washington state. This program allows students to go full time to the college and earn an associates degree along with a high school diploma. This just furthered my resolve in my views on education. It helped me take education for what it is and not misconceive its purpose in my life. Education has always been an intentional avenue to move forward in my life. I don't see the utility in trying to "find myself" through my schooling experience. Sure, I want to enjoy it, but that shouldn't come at the expense of time or money spent.

After earning my associates, I went on to start my bachelors in computer science at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. I spent my first year and a half there enjoying the college experience while still taking challenging coursework. After my first year at GCU, I got engaged to my then girlfriend. I stayed at GCU for one last semester before transferring to Washington State Vancouver campus, where my now wife and I are both from. It was important for us to be near both of our families, who still live in the Vancouver area. This brings things to now. I am continuing my education while working part time as a tire technician and salesman at Costco.

My personality

I'm not a big writer or creative arts type person. I've taken multiple aptitude and personality tests and they've only affirmed what I already knew. I have high analytical, mathematical, and logical aptitudes. This comes out in my selective communication; I take my time to think before I speak. Drama is unproductive to me and causes unnecessary conflict. I try to avoid conflict whenever I can. I don't let things fester though. Clear communication is vital for success. I take things seriously as a person. I feel immense responsibility for my actions and for anyone who relies on my care. That's part of why I am confident. I still have fun and try to maximize the enjoyment of any environment I'm in. I do things right the first time. I take my time to iron out all the details. However, I have learned throughout my education to not always focus so hard on making something perfect. Weighing the pros and cons of spending time to make certain details perfect has shown me that a lot of the time they just need to be good, not perfect. I always make sure that I am proud of the work I do. Being a reliable and trustworthy person is what I aspire to be. People are able to depend on me to be a steady presence in their life or even in project settings.

My skills/school and work background

During my time at community college I was able to take a couple of computer science related courses. One course I took introduced me to Python and object oriented programming. This gave me my first peak at the computer science and technology field in education. It intrigued me, but I struggled with some of the concepts of coding.

My time at GCU was fruitful. I gained knowledge in programming, algorithms, and theories. I coded with C++, Python, and even learned how to develop virtual reality environments in Unity and Visual Studio. But my coursework made me realize that their computer science program wasn't right for me. I recognized that I didn't want to learn theory and programming to become a software engineer and use theory and programming exclusively for a living. I didn't see myself being effective in that field. But I realized that there were other fields in the computer science world where I could find my fit.

I have no experience with R, terminal, or many of the other R related technologies that will be used in this course. However, I am a determined learner and with collaboration I am usually able to take on any problem.

My goals

Firstly, I want to use my job to provide for myself and my family. My goal with school is to start creating a foundation that can prepare me for a career. I don't have specific career aspirations or exact jobs in mind, but I do want to find a position that will allow me to grow and learn. One of my practical goals is to be out of debt within 5 years of graduating. A job where I earn enough to do that is a huge plus. But a first job that gives me practical experience and an environment that encourages mentorship and personal growth is

my main priority. I want to be able to build off of that. It doesn't have to necessarily be an analytics job, but working to attain any sort of business intelligence goal would be preferred.

In the long run, I don't ever want to look back at a job and think that I stayed in it even though it made me miserable. I want to gain enough practical skills to where I don't have to be held down in one place because I haven't made any progress to move onto something greater.