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English Composition

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Back to School

In the summer of 2017 I was adrift. I had just graduated from high school and was working as a sales associate at Staples in Bedford, NH, but did not know what was next. I had always planned on going to college after high school but I was a poor student and didn’t even finish applying to schools. It was a long journey through jobs, unemployment, and mental health treatment after high school before I finally felt ready to go back to school at NHTI.

As a child I was considered very smart and was praised by my teachers who often went out of their way to give me extra enrichment, but as I got older I found it more and more difficult to succeed. In sixth grade I stopped turning in some homework assignments and in Eight grade I failed my first class. Things did not get better throughout high school and by my senior year I was late almost every day and had failed several classes in previous years. I managed to graduate only by the skin of my teeth.

I still loved learning, Math and Physics were my favorite, but I have interests in every field. I wanted to go to college but I knew it was not realistic and I would most likely continue to do poorly, so I didn’t apply. Instead I continued working in retail at Staples and I hated it. I found it menial, demeaning, and frankly, beneath me. I eventually had a breakdown before work and quit on the spot.

The next few months were some of the worst of my life. I had nothing going on in my life and wasn’t looking for a job. Eventually my family pestered me about it enough that I started applying places and I put my resumé up on job sites. After about a month of applying to places sporadically, I hadn’t even had an interview, but my luck was about to turn around. I got an email about a job opportunity from a recruiter who had seen my resumé on Indeed. His email didn’t have any specifics except that he recruits for the IT and software development fields but I was interested in software development and I was willing to try anything.

I started working at a company that makes software for non-profits as a temp, but would probably become a full employee after six months. I was doing phone, chat, and email tech support for a web application that private K-12 schools use to manage their website, classes, schedule, students and many other such things. The job was good at first. I liked many of the people I worked with and our clients. I also but my own desk for the first time, but most importantly, I was really good at the job. However, It was a while before I really know how good I was.

In a meeting about a year after I started working at this company, my latest supervisor brought up that I seemed to be extra stressed. He assumed it was because of the job and suggested that I try to take it slower, essentially get less work done, which was surprising. It wasn’t something I had ever expected to hear from a manager. It began to make sense when he showed me that statistics. I was handling twice as many issues every day as any of my coworkers. He was right that I was stressed, or maybe frustrated is a better word for it. I liked many aspects of the job, but I had started finding things I disliked as well.

Many of our clients were great to work with, they knew what they were doing or were willing to learn, but some either struggled to follow step by step instructions or did not want to learn to use this software. I understood to some extent; they were usually people that had been working at the school for years and suddenly had to use this new piece of technology that they maybe felt shouldn’t be part of their job. However, they still made my job a lot harder and frustration with that began to build up. I also began to realize that working in a corporate environment was not fulfilling to me. I felt like my job was almost pointless, because what I was accomplishing didn’t feel like it mattered, and many of the jobs I could see myself doing if I stayed were the same. I realized I was much more interested in working in academia and decided to go back to school.

After a few years of tech support I applied to NHTI and quit my job. Quitting was exciting and nerve wracking at the same time. It was a big risk. I wasn’t sure if I would do well in school this time and if I didn’t, I had just lost any progress I had made at that position. I also no longer had an income and while I had savings, and not many expenses because I still lived at home. The expenses that I did have would all have to come out of my savings.

After being accepted to NHTI, I spoke with Kerry Cook, the mathematics department head, about my schedule. During the conversation she asked if I would be interested in tutoring students in math for the school which sounded great to me. It was a job that I thought I would be good at and it would be able to easily work around my schedule so I agreed to do it. Now that I’ve been tutoring for a few months, I’ve found that I love it. It is similar to tech support in it’s format and goal, but I find it much more fulfilling and not frustrating at all. I also love math which also makes tutoring math enjoyable.

I’ve known since I was a child that I would like to do some type of a research as a career, but tutoring for these last few months has helped me realize that I would enjoy teaching as well. When I decided to go back to school I planned on eventually getting a PhD in physics and my experience with tutoring has solidified that goal. I plan on getting a PhD in physics or math and becoming a professor of the subject.