I chose personal development as one of my highest personal values from the list. This is something I knew as soon as I read it. Nobody is perfect but we can do small things to improve ourselves every day. I'm a big fan of figuring out anything that could make my life better, even if it means putting some work in. Growing up I liked to look to others as to see how I could improve, by listening and observing. I would pick out what I could and continue to find ways to improve in school, sports, etc. It is harder to listen to advice though when you are younger and I would selectively pick what I would hear sometimes.

However, I think this value really struck hard with me following college. I did not like the place or career I was in and knew I had to do something to make it better. I did not know what that was entirely, so I continued to search around. I picked up yoga and cycling which really helped me in my personal development. There is a physical reason I started to get into yoga as well. I kept getting injuries like tendonitis and bursitis and they told me I have tons of tension in my muscles and it caused this injury. Tension is something that runs high in my family, so this really wasn't a surprise to me. Then one physical therapist suggested yoga as a way to help stretch out the muscles and relieve this tension. I tried yoga and continue to stretch frequently to help get rid of this tension. I don't mind doing this every day because I'm always finding new things I didn't know I could do. Also, I attribute cycling to giving me a boost of endurance and flexibility, which has helped increase my focus on work and web development.

The other word I hold high on my list of values is serenity. I put a lot of value into being in an environment where you, and everyone around you, are at peace. The closer I get to the state of serenity, the clearer my thinking and decision making are. I value taking time away to sit and ponder, knowing that not all answers will be apparent immediately. This is a skill that I learned at a very young age from my elementary school. I went to a Quaker school from elementary to high school. One of the practices of Quakers, really the only Quakerly thing we were required to do was meeting for worship. In meeting for worship we would sit in silence as community, and stand up if we felt moved to share something with the group. Even though this was 45 minutes once a week, it was very difficult for kindergarteners to do but it taught us a valuable skill that has stuck with me. Finding inner piece is something I continue to do through yoga and meditation. It is very important to me that there is balance in my life and my environment.