

## **The Windmill View**

Hiking was an activity during the summer of 2015 that got my mind off things. As a recent high school graduate that wasn't immediately leaving home for college, the uncertainty of my future terrified me. This crossed my mind everyday until the day I went on the Pali Trail.

Me and my friend Scott had planned our second hike of the summer. Me, Scott and two other friends got out of the car at the bottom of the winding trail. As Scott got out of the car he kicked up the dust and squinted at the sun that glared back at him. I remember he jokingly said "why didn't we just go to the beach like normal people?"

Scott was one of my only friends that decided not to attend any college after high school. He grimaced at the thought of schoolwork and could not bring it to himself to climb the academic path after just finishing "mandatory school" as he calls it.

The Pali trail was challenging. It wasn't exactly the difficulty of the trail itself, but the heat that day was unbearable. It was ten in the morning when we started so the sun was already out baking our flesh. The air was still and silent, not a whisper of wind came our way to brisk our sweat ridden backs and faces. We couldn't sit because every rock felt like a crackling bonfire. Not only were our leg muscles screaming louder with every single step we took, but gallons of sweat seeped through our shirts as the day got hotter, and hotter.

We had agreed that once we got to the top where the windmills were, we'd head back down. We were new to the trail, so we didn't exactly know how far we needed to go to get there. As time passed my friends got discouraged, especially Scott. Soon as we got to a shady tree he'd say "let's stop", when we were catching our breaths he'd say "we should head back now." But I just had this feeling, if we kept going we'd see the top.

Eventually we got to this mile marker that said “2.5 miles.” Scott was furious at that point, he exclaimed “I’m done! we came this far, and we’re only halfway there!” He rambled on for a good five minutes and started heading back down. I said “Scott wait! Look at those steps.” On the side of a hill that was too tall for us to see over, there were rocky steps leading to another path. We weren’t only halfway there. We were there.

That feeling I got, when I got to the top of those steps was a mix of relief, joy, and awe combined into one beautiful moment. I felt like I was a character in a movie scene because what lay in front of me was a whole bunch of open field in contrast to the 2.5 miles of cramped hiking space we had just went through. But in the middle were windmills lined up side by side, each towering so high that they could tickle the clouds. Looking down towards the horizon in front of the windmills was a perfectly painted portrait of daytime Maui. My friends were right behind me, in as much disbelief as I was. It was definitely a gorgeous view, but the fact that we had nearly given up, when this was all just a staircase away made the view utterly divine.

What made this even more special was in that moment, I realized I had learned a lesson relevant to me, that progress won’t always be clear. We had seen this view because we kept going, even though uncertainty discouraged us. Making the decision to not immediately leave home for college made me feel like I was headed nowhere. The windmill view changed my entire perspective. I realized that sometimes you have to ignore the idea of progress and just push forward even when you feel helplessly stuck. Keep the drive to move forward under all circumstances, because your own windmill view could be right around the corner.

