

Someone once told me when I was a kid that “in the blink of an eye, everything can change”. Well, this quote held true 100% on the date of August 4th, 2014, the week before I was supposed to leave for Marine Corps boot camp in San Diego. On this day, my father was told he had stage 4 cancer and had less than five years to live. As an 18-year-old, many thoughts ran through my head. Do I forget going Active Duty and instead go Reserves so I can stay home more? Do I just cancel my enlistment plans so I can be home with my father? Long story short, the joint decision with my father to continue the pursuit of my plans for the Marines ended up being the best decision I made.

Ever since I was a kid, I have felt like I have worked harder than most my peers to succeed. As soon as I hit the age of 13, I was already umpiring baseball and caddying at a local country club. I always had a desire to work within sports, but also the desire to prove to my parents that I could be financially self-sufficient. Growing up in a wealthier suburb, it always bothered me how individuals would rely on their parents for money, so these employment opportunities allowed me to not be in that mix. These experiences eventually also led me to my high school years, where I ended up being elected for the Executive Board of the Key Club, which is a high school volunteer organization. During this time, we were one of the top five largest high school key clubs in the entire state with over 300 members. On the executive board, my purpose was to represent our high school, find volunteers, and plan out local volunteer events with the community. Doing this, I could have easily used this experience for scholarship opportunities to take the ‘normal’ route and attend college. Looking back, maybe that would have saved me quite a bit of stress, but why take the easy route? Instead, in the same month I turned 18, I enlisted in the Marines.

While in the Marines, I have proved my character over and over. After serving on a 6-month deployment, I was chosen to be the intelligence department lead for a new squadron (aviation unit) that moved from California to Hawaii. This meant overseeing numerous junior Marines to ensure they were successful not only as analysts, but also in their professional development. I also received the honor of being hand-picked as the unit color Sergeant, which is a position that only one person in the entire unit of 300+ Marines receive. However, behind these awards was the work that nobody else ever saw. It meant studying for hours after work while everybody else was at home, hitting the gym at 6am, taking college classes while others were partying, and much more. From a personal level, I also made some amazing friends and met so many people with diverse backgrounds. From working with people all the way from Haiti to the farm-raised kids from Iowa, talking with these people helped shape me and understand the world we live in today.

Coming back to MSOE and Milwaukee, I have been able to succeed both personally and professionally. While maintaining a great relationship with my family (and my father, who has beaten his chance of survival by 3 years), I have maintained a 3.65 GPA at the same time as having an internship since my freshman year at Northwestern Mutual as a DevOps Engineering Intern. I have also been elected for the Academic Success Chair (brand new position) in the MSOE Veterans Organization, where my responsibility is to ensure academic success for fellow veterans by providing one on one veteran tutoring, as well as academic mentoring in general.

As far as future goals are concerned, I feel like a lot of engineers get caught up in the technical aspect of what they want to achieve. For example, a lot of my fellow computer science majors always talk about the technologies they want to work with, and the Silicon Valley companies they desire to work for. However, my goals are a bit different from the norm. During my time working for numerous managers, I

noticed that the happiest times I had working were when I was working for a tremendous manager. Therefore, my goals are to be a leader of people. Having led many Marines, I feel like my experiences doing so, and the rewards that come from it are something I really miss. Even when those beneath me made mistakes and did not represent our department well, the satisfaction I received from when they did have success is something that makes me want to continue on as a manager in the future, instead of just solely sticking with the standard proficiency in technical skills. As a result, I have been soaking up as much knowledge as possible during my internship from managers to lead properly and have motivated employees in a technical field.

Overall, I still have plenty of challenging experiences I will come across. However, my accomplishments I have earned set me apart from my peers.

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