

*The year is 2025, what is your biggest accomplishment?*

One of my favorite songs, Helplessness Blues, starts with “I was raised up believing, I was somehow unique... But now after some thinking I’d say I’d rather be, a functioning cog in some great machinery serving something beyond me.” The lyrics contradict today’s western culture and what I grew up around. But after thinking about it, I realized I do not want my life to be glamorous or to be recognized each day for my accomplishments, but rather, I want to be able to derive my happiness from myself and how I live.

The year is 2025. I am 27. I have been working and out of college for some time now. My greatest accomplishment is my balanced lifestyle. It took me many years to trim excess activities I participated in that distracted from my overall goal: to live a low-stress and healthy life. In high school and college, I neglected my mental and physical health by never getting enough sleep, and juggling so many activities I would sometimes feel overwhelmed or discouraged. Since then, I have learned the value in living simply. More is not always better. But let’s start with how I got here.

Right after college, the company I worked with in my co-op position offered me a job. I loved the company and took it immediately. My starting salary was large enough that I could support myself and begin to pay off my student loans. The business I worked for was everything I had ever wanted in a job. As an Environmental Engineer, I was working on making green energy affordable and more easily accessible. The people I worked with were all competent and my job offered new challenges each day. After working with the company for five years, I have completed a Masters degree and am beginning to solve more complex and interesting problems. My job is incredibly rewarding. Each day I come back to my house satisfied with my effort and grateful that I am part of a dynamic team.

Because I come home with energy to spare, on the weeknights I have time to call one of my brothers or my parents to catch up, or go out to dinner with one of my friends. I also have the time to exercise and do the sports I love. My weekends in the summer are filled with hiking and rock climbing, and in the winter, I can go skiing.

My life is not glamorous, or flashy. Over time I have learned how to diminish much of the stress and day-to-day worry. It may seem boring to other people, but my balanced lifestyle has made me happier than I have ever been, it is my greatest accomplishment.