Personal Narrative Essay

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Abstract

My name is Marcus Sowers and I'm currently a senior at Old Dominion University. I plan on graduating at the end of this 2024 summer semester with a Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity. Even though this huge accomplishment is right around the corner, it was a long and tough journey to finally get to. Within this narrative essay I plan on giving key insight on the journey it took to get here, recognizing my personal growth over my years in college, and ultimately acknowledging important information and experiences I received. This essay will be an opportunity to share my story and overall personal brand while highlighting particular motivation to what made me confident in my decision of picking my career path.

My Childhood

The first thing I would like to discuss is my childhood. I would like to give an overall understanding of who exactly I am and how I grew up to become who I am today. I grew up in a household of 6, with 3 sisters. As I grew up both my parents worked 12-hour shifts, which pointed me to becoming the head of the household when they weren't available at home because I am the oldest. Growing up in this particular way created me to become hardworking and independent. With both parents not being around usually until dinnertime, I had to take on responsibilities at a very young age. I had to not only take care of myself, but also had to step up for my younger siblings and along with take care of them. Being independent most of my life has allowed me to grow and learn different traits and capabilities including being self-productive, open minded, hardworking and even gaining the flexibility to solve critical problems by myself. With two hardworking and dedicated parents, it gave me extra motivation to grow up to be just like them! My father worked in the HVAC field while my mother worked in the Dental industry as an assistant. Being very close to my father allowed me to get early experience in the technological field. When I was young, before I was able to work legally and get paid, I would help my father out with his "Side" Jobs. He would basically help out friends and family members when they were in need of A/C Repair, a heat furnace repair, or even plumbing issues. As I helped him out over time, I slowly gained higher interest in technology. I always had a slight interest in technology because of playing video games and computer repairs, but gaining real-life experience gave me more motivation to pursue what I am interested in. Even though I had a slight understanding of who I wanted to become, it was much harder than I could have ever anticipated.

Major Questions

When I began my college career, I was very uncertain about going to a university. With plenty of opportunity in trade careers, I took into consideration going to trade school to learn what my father was teaching me at a very young age. I was an all "A" student who learned and excelled throughout high school but was very in denial of applying to further my education at a university. I always believed the debt of going to a university would be sequential to my future, but after taking hard and time-consuming consideration, I came to my decision to enroll into my local community college. After a rough and disappointing first semester, I almost dropped out. I spoke to my advisor about my possible future and with her motivation I was able to get my education back on track. I excelled the next few semesters which really boosted my confidence in my potential college future. After a few personal successful courses, I finally decided to transfer and further my education to the fullest potential to Old Dominion University. Once I transferred to this university, I noticed how interesting and excelled their cybersecurity program was. I was initially under the mechanical engineering and the information technology major programs but as soon as I transferred, I knew exactly what I wanted to major in.

Thoughts, Reflection, Motivation

An ePortfolio is an online resource that acts to record, store and archive every artifact of learning and reflection of a person's career while describing themselves thoroughly for others. I believe this is huge not only for individuals, but for companies and businesses who are looking to hire as well. They'll be able to get more of an understanding of who they plan

on giving an opportunity for an interview before they actually do it. An ePortfolio allows

technology to fully represent their personal interest and display it as authentic as possible.

Even though someone may not have a lot of experience or skills to show typically on a

resume, I think this gives a great opportunity for someone to represent and show other

tangibles they could provide to a business or company. For an individual like me who may

not have many hard skills, can display other tangible including soft skills and previous

experience and traits. I believe I don't have many hard skillsets within the cybersecurity

field because of my lack of experience, but I am a dedicated hard worker who can critically

problem solve and can provide great communication and leadership skills. With basic

understanding of Python, JavaScript, and C++ and no work experience in the cybersecurity

field, this a great opportunity to show previous work and other skillsets that I can provide

that would be beneficial. Working with my father at a young age gave me great motivation

and an understanding of what is needed to be the best and most efficient worker I can be.

With this experience I was able to reflect and gain the desire to help and serve others. I was

also able to focus on what exactly my biggest motivations and motivators are. I believe my

biggest motivators are more along the communal themes like love, companionship, sense of

community, etc. Being the oldest of my family's household and growing up with parents

who always believed in me and my future, are key reasons why I found my motivation and

motivators. Family and relationships are extremely important to me. As I get older, I am

beginning to grasp the concept that I am currently in the position to take care of everyone

around me if I apply myself and stay focused on progressing through my potential careers.

Present Day

Everything that has been discussed has accumulated to this exact moment. It has been a long and tough journey, but I can proudly say I will be graduating with a cybersecurity degree. With 2 major changes, a transfer, and a year taken off because of COVID I can finally complete a huge accomplishment and start my career journey. My main priority is being able to take care of my family and the people closest to me, so job security is a huge must for stability. With technology continuously adapting and growing at a rapid pace, cybersecurity and other IT job opportunities should be available more often. My soft skills including business development, communication, and even team leadership can help me become the best worker possible. This will then increase my odds of my longevity within the cybersecurity field and solidify the stability I am pursuing for. As I'm getting older, my family is beginning to get separated because all my siblings are beginning to grow into the lives of their own. With this being the case, traveling is a huge thing I would love to do in the future. The cybersecurity, information technology, and even computer science industries provide excellent opportunities with jobs that can be completed from an at-home office. Throughout the course of my studies at Old Dominion University, I have learned a lot of information and gained knowledge that will be beneficial to my future in cybersecurity. I have gained an understanding of cybersecurity's impact on society, the vulnerability technology is exposed to, and even learned hard skills that could help prevent and even stop potential threats/attacks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my journey throughout Old Dominion University has been a beneficial and transformative experience, not just impacting my future career path but also my entire outlook on life. With the early struggles of trying to balance family responsibility to achieving academic uncertainties, I can proudly say each step and lesson has contributed to my growth and resilience that will be demonstrated throughout me daily! My "adulthood" as a child allowed me to gain a work ethic and independence that created the foundation for my academic and future professional success. My time at the greatest university, Old Dominion, has helped me find my passion for cybersecurity along with providing me the necessary technical and soft skills needed to excel in the field despite any previous challenges. As my time is coming to an end and I begin to start my career in the professional field, the lessons I learned and constant motivation will help me provide the stability I would like to have for my family and myself. The future is bright and holds a million opportunities that are waiting to be seized, especially in the forever evolving technological field. I am eager but also nervous to see what my abilities will impact in this field positively. This degree is a steppingstone towards my long-term success in my future career and personal desires.