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“Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” This is a quote by Winston S. Churchill, who was a soldier, writer, and a prime minister...twice. This quote resonated with me as soon as I read it. Growing up I have always been the type of person to never feel satisfied with what I achieve and always be hard on myself when I mess up, or in my eyes, fail. Things have since changed, and I have grown in many different ways. I am a junior in college and have experienced many things that have shaped me into the person I am today, and I currently work for the DEQ of Virginia to begin my marine biology experience.

Growing up I always stayed on the water. Whether that be fishing with my dad or out on our family-friends boat. I grew up super close to nature which has definitely shaped me into the person I have become today. I have become linked with marine life and have learned how to truly appreciate every aspect of it, because of all the time I spent interacting with it and my dad. We were never fisherman who kept the fish we caught, instead we would release them as quickly and safely as possible, occasionally included an assisted revival of the fish, because of how much we respected them. I strongly believe that it was my connection with the marine ecosystem that shaped me into the person I am today. Another experience that made me want to become a marine biologist is when me and my dad used to help the marine biologist at the Cleveland MetroParks in Cleveland Ohio, we would tag fish and gather data from the fish and marine life at the parks and he would later study and ship that data out.

I plan on becoming a Marine Biologist somewhere located on the East coast of the US. This is no easy feat; however, I know I can accomplish this. I currently am employed at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ) where I am gaining experience in the science field. My work consists of me going along with two or three other workers where we collect water samples in different bodies of water in the tidewater region of Virginia. On top of us collecting the samples of the water, which we ship to be measured in another facility, we also will collect water and run it through a filtration device and collect the filters which we will then also send out to be measured.

Success is not something to be expected without putting in effort, however, failure is. Whether you succeed or fail, it is a part of our journey, and I have accepted how to take these successes or failures and learn from them. My love of nature that started before I could tie my shoes to me now working for the VADEQ to collect water samples proves this. My experiences growing up to my experiences I am going through currently in my life will lead to me to where I want to be; a marine biologist.