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Honors 100
Mayer
25 November 2018

Antifragility: Q1 Reflection

Quarter 1 of my first year has been different than expected; the courses I've chosen are easier than expected, but there have been difficulties finding activities I enjoy while balancing social life / other events. Some major routine changes include taking up running (something I always despised), meditating, and increasing intake of news. In particular, I have gained a greater understanding of the subconscious and conscious forces that drive my mood and satisfaction with life so that I can better design and develop my daily routine to maximize my happiness. Simultaneously, I am aggressively pursuing career opportunities – I've been applying for internships, finding research labs, etc. Overall, I am relatively satisfied with the progress I've made through the first quarter (8/10).

The biggest surprise for me at UW is the lack of ease when trying to discover new activities. Our RSO directory is outdated and finding events on Facebook is contingent upon knowing a club's name or having a mutual reference (both of which can be difficult). This outdated RSO directory is still astounding – at a school of >30,000 undergraduates, updating the website should be a top priority. Luckily, I have found extracurriculars: I joined the Student Advisory Council in the CSE department and was accepted into the UW symphony.

Another surprise was relating to introvertedness vs extrovertedness. Not only did I gain an appreciation for introverted friends, I also recognized my own introvertedness and the importance of solitude in relationships. "Solitude is where you find yourself so that you can reach out to other people and form real attachments," said Sherry Turkle on an article in TED Ideas. Specifically, the time I've spent alone at UW has greatly enhanced my understanding of self and built my skills in processing emotions / understanding unhappiness. I've also realized that the vast majority of my friends tend to be extroverted (far more than the 30% of the country that is extroverted), so I will be making additional efforts to increase the diversity of my friend group.

Honors 100 does peak my interest in Honors study abroad programs. I'd like to travel abroad and contrast their unique views and routines with my own. In addition, because I would take the study abroad program during the summer, there would be limited concern for scheduling issues / lacking appropriate credit. Alternatively, I could pursue CSE study abroad programs when I am a junior and focus on different views in computer science between America and Europe. Both of these programs are exciting opportunities to travel and learn more, so they will likely be revisited when the application opens.

For Q2, I hope to pursue self-advancement in three avenues. First, I plan to persistently expand efforts in social engagement. This includes joining clubs, continuing work in CSESAC, and focusing efforts on specific activities I enjoy (i.e. violin). Second, I hope to maintain strong academic performance, especially in CSE 351 and HONORS 345. CSE 351 will be the first CSE course featuring entirely new material, and is a 300-level course, so I have mild anxiety over its

difficulty. In addition, HONORS 345 is my first college composition course and I am concerned over the frequency of the assignments. However, I am confident that study skills developed this quarter will be applicable (with some modifications). Third, I'd like to build greater emotional maturity and compassion for others. The guided meditation app I use, Headspace, features sessions that focus on these topics, and I am hopeful that I can begin to integrate these principles into my life.

Overall, the positive performance in Q1 and establishment of a productive routine has strengthened my self-esteem and optimism for the future. Simply put, the challenges in Q2 will be overcome with support from friends, staff, and self-resilience. Q1 can therefore be summarized in a single word: *antifragility*. The positives and negatives throughout the quarter have laid a foundation for success – I am at a university with opportunities to Excel and have the resources needed to be happy.