

The Never-Ending Cycle

It was 5:45 P.M. I just got off the bus on my way from school. It is freezing outside but luckily my house is right across the street from the bus stop. As I'm walking down the street, I reach into the pockets of my bookbag to get out my key. As usual, I've lost it again. When I arrived at my door, I prayed that was unlocked since someone should have been in the living room. I didn't feel like searching through my bag again because it's always a struggle due to how unorganized everything is in there. I didn't want to knock on the front door because I'm expected to have a key to my own house. To my relief, the door opened when I turned the handle. The door is usually locked but today I got lucky. As I walked in the house, I turned and saw my grandmom sitting on the couch, sleeping with a ziplock bag of cookies in her lap while her nurse sat beside her scrolling through pictures on Instagram. My grandmom required a nursing sitter for a few hours during the day because of her problems with dementia, Alzheimer's, and schizophrenia. The nurse greeted me after I came in, asking me how I was, Regardless of how I felt, I replied with "good" every time before lifting what felt like a thousand pounds of stress off my shoulder in the form of my bookbag. I wondered to myself how I managed to lose my key again. I intended to look for my key once I got situated, but that soon became a distant memory as I pulled out my phone to play a few games of Clash Royale.

After losing myself in my phone for the next 10 minutes, the nurse waved goodbye and left the house, leaving my grandmom in the care of myself. Back in November of 2015, my mom was diagnosed with Leukemia. Since then she has recovered from the life-threatening disease, but she still has certain complications that prevent her from being at her full strength on a

consistent basis. It's very hard for her to come home after a long day of work and constantly attend to my grandmom, so I try to do all the things I can to help her. My job is too simply be home before the nurse leaves, feed my grandmom, and take her up the stairs every night before my mom arrives. On top of that. I had to do my chores as well. It sounds simple, right? Well, that's the exact opposite of how I would describe this process.

Usually, when my grandmom speaks to me, she refers to me as 'Curtis,' one of her nephews that lived with her off and on until his unfortunate death in 2003. If not Curtis, she'll call me 'Jajuan,' her son and my uncle who stops by the house from time to time. I don't look like either of them but granted her situation, I can't really complain about what she calls me. When she identifies my face and voice with either of those two, my task of taking her up the stairs become much more difficult. She doesn't like being told what to do, no matter how nicely I ask and she'll always have an excuse for continuing to stay on the very comfortable couch. Every night, I have to come up with a different scenario to get her to go up the stairs. One of my most successful tactics is to knock on the door, open it, and act like I'm someone else. She only seems to listen to me if she doesn't realize who I am. I don't complain though. I take what I can get. Instead of doing this in a timely manner though, I always wait until the 7 'o'clock hour knowing that I should have started earlier. My mom gets off of work at 7:30 and she usually is home within the hour. The whole process of getting her to go upstairs can take anytime from 5 minutes to 1 hour. She can be extremely stubborn, and there has been a multitude of times where she outright refused to move. My one job is to make sure my mom doesn't have to put up with her yet I give myself anxiety by scratching the surface every night. An enormous amount of guilt

begins to fill my body the longer she sits on the count. I thought o myself, “Man, why did I wait this long?”

Some of my guilt goes away with each step that she takes. After she’s situated in her room, I can finally take a second to breathe. I feel a sense of relief whenever I can successfully get her to her room. This sense of relief for just a brief moment though. When I go back downstairs, its almost 8 PM and I know what that means. I reluctantly went to pick up the thousand pounds of stress that I dropped on the floor earlier. I brought it over to the dining room table and perched it on my lap. It was time for me to start my homework. I pulled out my laptop and logged onto Canvas. The first thing I took a look at was the “Coming Up” section. There were many assignments that needed to be completed. There was one for Physics, Algebra II, 20th Century Literature, English and World History. Two of the assignments were due at midnight while two more had to be completed before their class in the morning. Each assignment required 30 more minutes more or more time. I don’t know where to begin. More importantly, I didn’t know how to begin. I felt so overwhelmed. My chores weren’t completed and I could tell my mom was upset when she came home to the dishes not being done. I had completely forgotten, again.

I told her after I was done my homework, I would do all the chores I needed t. Instead of starting my work though, I decided to play a few games on my phone for no reason at all. After each match ended, I told myself, “This is the last one before I start.” This continued until I lost enough times to the point where I don’t want to play anymore. It was 9:00 now. I was

disappointed in myself letting an hour go to waste. Right before I go to reopen my laptop, I got a snap message from my girlfriend. Of course, I responded to her and we talked for a bit until she had to eat dinner. But instead of putting away my phone after talking to her, I start watching people's Snapchat stories. Before I knew it, I'm going through all of my social media flip-flopping between the different apps, scrolling and scrolling to no end.. This continued until I noticed that the time was. 10:00. Anxiety and fear began to flow through my body. I asked myself why did I waste two hours of my doing absolutely nothing productive. I had no other choice but to start now. I pulled up my World History assignment and I began reading the directions. A few minutes in and I had already pulled up a YouTube tab. It felt like there was a force that preventing me from progressing. Every night when I went to do my homework, I felt this way. "Why can't I focus?" I asked myself this over and over again while I continued searching through my subscription box. Soon, I fell asleep at the table with none of my homework completed. I woke up sad, disappointed, and frustrated. "Why?" That's all I could think. It felt like a never-ending cycle. I just wanted to escape from it but I just couldn't.

I thought there had to be a reason for my behavior. I constantly forgot to do things, I misplaced damn near everything in my possession. I was always anxious or depressed. My attention span and focus levels were at an all-time low. I couldn't stop procrastinating despite trying my best to remove any possible distraction. Most importantly, my health, my grades, and my relationships with others was negatively affected by my lifestyle. After doing some research on my behavior, feelings, and mannerisms, I came across a video titled "How To Know If You Have ADHD" by the user, nigahiga. The video wasn't meant to diagnose anyone but it was

helpful in seeing whether or not there was a possibility. I never thought about the possibility of having ADHD prior to watching this video. The video went through many situations that people with ADHD experience and I related to about 95% of them. I showed the video to my mom, my friends, and my girlfriend and they could all see the signs as well. I never noticed something simple as the amount of soap and shampoo I go through. Like the video said, my best ideas came out when I was showering, so I naturally used more soap and shampoo. My mom was shocked at the time of me showing the video to her because she was wondering earlier in the week just how I had run through 4 bars of soap in under a couple of weeks. With this knowledge, I thought I had finally found the answer all my problems. Except, it wasn't that simple. While I may have learned what could be a possible cause of my behavior, I have yet to learn how to successfully manage my it. I'm not sure if I ever will.

It feels like everyone else around has everything figured out. What makes matters worse is that due to my nonchalant, laid-back nature, everyone else in my life believes that I'm doing just fine. Little do they know that I'm in dire need of help. I know just what kind of person I want to be. I know the things that I want to do. I just need to try. I need to keep trying until I can't anymore.