Destiny Lizama

30 Day Challenge Speech

**Intro:**

For my 30 day challenge my original plan was to play guitar every day for 30 days and see if I was able to learn one simple song. In theory, it was simple. Practice makes perfect. However I found that saying and doing were two vastly different things. Though, at first I was optimistic, I soon ran in to challenges that molded my perspective. This however, was only for the better because it only made me appreciate musicians more for their hard work and dedication.

**My Plan:**

As I said, my plan was to learn a song on guitar in 30 days. I wanted to play every night for at least an hour. My first week would be dedicated to practicing finger placement for chords,

the second week would be focused on strumming and staying on beat, and the last few days would be reserved for practicing my song of choice (which at the time I hadn’t even chosen). In the beginning of the month, around March 1st, I genuinely believed my plan was rock solid. I had even set exact times I would practice. But believing in my plan so strongly, was ultimately my downfall, I’ll expand on this later. My stubbornness led me to have a hard time adapting my 30-Day-Challenge to the constant changes throughout the month brought by COVID-19. So let’s get into what I actually did for the 30 days.

**What I Actually Did for 30 Days:**

To be completely transparent, I did not practice everyday. But for a little context (for everyone who hasn’t learned guitar from scratch before), It *hurts.* From all the videos I watched and people I talked to they all described learning to play as “uncomfortable”. When I think of something uncomfortable I think of needing to pee 3 minutes away from home or sitting on a chair with little to no back support for a couple of hours. Something not downright painful and also not lasting for a long period of time. Not only did my wrists hurt from bending and twisting all different types of ways, but my *fingers* would turn red (and sometimes even light purple), numb, and I would have blisters for the following days.

Playing constantly with blisters was really hard. Occasionally I’d have pain in my wrists, similar to carpal tunnel. Because of this I would take 2-3 day breaks in between playing. But, in between the days I practiced I would watch youtube videos on people playing, tutorials, or research things about guitar. Majority of the month I spent less than half of the time playing which tested my ability to be flexible in reaching my goals. It was a great learning experience but I was disappointed with how little I played versus how much I wanted to play. Up to day 20 this was the only challenge I faced. Somewhere during the last ten days I met my maker, which in the end caused me to fail my challenge.

**A Broken String:**

I broke my string somewhere around the last 10 days of the challenge. This was a huge curve ball because it was too late to order a set of strings online. It would have taken about 2 weeks to get here, which would be just fine for the long-term but I needed a quick fix so I could get back on my feet with playing right away. Living in Tinian, I had no real option on the island to get a quick replacement. My other guitar was also missing that same string so I couldn’t just transfer one over (which admittedly was my plan for if and when this would occur). So plan B was to get my boyfriend Leo, who was living on saipan at the time, to buy me a set of strings and mail it down via Star Marianas Air. He bought them the day before he was meant to send them down. That day the planes stopped flights when COVID-19 reached Saipan. In hindsight, the flights were probably still open for shipping but information was changing constantly and new rumours were going around everyday (just like now). The COVID panic put my 30-Day Challenge on pause until I could find a new string. Leo came back to Tinian in the last few days of the month so I didn’t completely give up. In the end I learned to play a song a week or so after the 30 days. So even though I didn’t meet the time deadline I still completed the goal I set for myself. After all my trials and tribulations there were still a lot of good things I took away from this whole experience.

**Good things:**

I genuinely learned a lot during the 30 days. Watching videos, practicing hands on, and talking to seasoned players really expanded my realm of possibilities. I’m sure I would’ve gotten much farther going to an actual class for music, but there’s something so fulfilling about learning on your own. The song I learned was a really basic version of Ben E. King’s “Stand by Me” which was available to learn on Youtube.

Another thing is it was really fun. This was probably one of the funnest academic projects I’ve ever taken on. Music is a beautiful form of expression and it was so exciting learning that on my own. Which also brings me to another positive aspect of this challenge. The 30 days was very much a starting point. I would compare this experience to planting a seed. Yes it sprouted but over the years and months it will grow and hopefully bear fruit, just like how I will continue to play and have fun doing it but maybe one day be able to make my own music or jam with other people.

**Overview:**

So in this whole experience I faced some rough patches that definitely taught me how to be flexible, accepting, and relaxed when in the face of a major challenge. Though, in the beginning it was painful, I’d say it was worth all the pain and discomfort. I genuinely had fun playing and learning something new. Even though it was frustrating it was almost like a happy frustration. I wasn’t forced to learn to play. I could’ve chosen a million other challenges that would’ve been just as fun and wouldn’t have put calluses on my fingertips. But I chose guitar and stuck with it and it was very rewarding. So even though I didn’t meet my deadline to complete my goal, I will know how to play that song for the rest of my life and that’s pretty awesome.

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