This I Believe- How the American Dream and Holy Grail Became One

This story about my personal beliefs started my junior year of high school. Before then, no one really cares about what you believe because you’re just a naive freshman or sophomore that thinks they know everything so they don’t bother asking. But when junior year comes around, people start trying to influence you because soon you’ll be the leaders of the high school and everyone else will look up to you. Well, my English III teacher did just that. Since the theme of the curriculum for junior English is American Literature, he started off the year practically preaching about the American Dream, citing and explaining examples such as The Grapes of Wrath or Of Mice and Men. He always had some grandiose picture illustrating how great everything was or a lyric sheet expressing someone’s happiness at their life.

Then the second half of the year, he turned everything into Grail Myth, the quest for your Holy Grail. That really struck me, especially when he showed the movie adaptation of Dead Poets’ Society with Robin Williams as Mr. Keating. The ending was what really got me thinking about how I want to live my life and what my own personal Holy Grail is. And this is the conclusion I came up with: I just ultimately want to be happy, and how I bring that about is by my service for and impact on other people. Nothing makes me happier than when the people I care about the most are happy themselves, and if I was the one to make them happy, there’s nothing more I can ask for. That’s part of the reason why I decided to go into engineering, because I can help improve the overall quality of life for many, many people through problem solving.

Another big preaching point of my English teacher was “Carpe Diem”, to seize the day. Dead Poets’ Society also pushed this heavily and if I had to pick a personal motto or mantra, it would be the quote from Robin William’s in the movie when he’s showing the boys the trophy case, “Carpe diem… Seize the day boys, make your lives extraordinary.” This is how I try to live, what I put my belief in; that if I try my best every day to work towards my Holy Grail of happiness, then I will have led a fulfilling life. This wraps up out my one, main core belief: Making others happy will in turn bring you happiness so do all you can to help others and you’ll feel ultimate satisfaction in return.