

Personal Vision

My personal vision statement can be succinctly put as sustainably and profoundly impacting as many lives as possible. I believe the skills I have honed in physical therapy, technology and business give me a unique opportunity to achieve such a personal vision.

The decision to become a physical therapist was a circuitous road. After college I postponed physical therapy school, deciding to become a co-founder of two technology startups, having always had a proclivity towards technology and business. As a child I loved setting up new technology devices that my parents bought and trading collectable cards on the schoolyard or bartering in the lunchroom. My rationale for postponing physical therapy school was that learning more about technology and business would help me become a better future physical therapist. As a co-founder I voraciously learned as much as I could about technology and business; consequently also learning many personal philosophies of extraordinary leaders. Three leaders in particular Ben Horowitz, Scott Adams and Elon Musk profoundly guided my personal decisions and ultimately helped shape my personal vision to sustainably and profoundly impact as many lives as possible.

Until hearing Ben Horowitz, a technology venture capitalist, give his commencement speech at Columbia, I had followed the cliché “follow your passions”. This cliché was what initially led me to pursue a Bachelors of Exercise Science at Florida State University. Horowitz however deposits that following your passion can be a fallacy that sounds mellifluous yet is possibly a selfish perspective. Following your passion focuses on the individual's desires at the cost of identifying how they could most positively impact humanity. American Idol has demonstrated over the years that simply having a passion for singing doesn't equate to being the next American Idol. Instead, Horowitz deposits to find a career where your natural talents can have the greatest impact on others. Immediately, I felt a duty to cultivate my proclivities toward technology and business before entering physical therapy school to maximize the positive impact I could have on others in the future.

After graduating with a Bachelors of Exercise Science and postponing physical therapy school to explore my proclivities of technology and business; the question “when should I start physical therapy school” would continually arise internally, usually when adversity in our tech startups arose. My decision to persist with tech startups was influenced by Scott Adams’s philosophy of how to become an extraordinary individual. Scott proposes individuals become extraordinary by either one of two routes. An individual can become world class in one talent or an individual can excel in a few talents that converge to yield an extraordinary result. An NBA player, professional basketball, would be an example of the former route while Scott Adams, creator of the famous comic Dilbert, is an example of the latter route. Both are extraordinary individuals, however, becoming an NBA player is riddled with pitfalls on the arduous road to achieving a world class talent. If one fails to become an NBA player then it’s difficult to parlay only one talent into something else that is extraordinary. Contrast this to Scott Adams, who was able to excel in drawing, comedy and business to become a well known cartoonist, speaker and author. Adams started drawing at an early age, continuing through business school and after being hired at a large corporation. Adams used his experiences around the corporate water cooler to create Dilbert, one of the most well known comic strips of it’s time; which differentiated itself from popular comic strips by using business satire derived from his business talents. Dilbert subsequently allowed Adams to become a speaker, author, and entrepreneur all because Adams honed a few talents which converged to yield extraordinary results. If one examines extraordinary individuals, it becomes clear they rarely mastered only one talent but are persons of a few talents that converged to create extraordinary results. Although arduous, I decided to continue honing my skills in technology and business before pursuing physical therapy school in this pursuit of excellence.

While Ben Horowitz and Scott Adams helped cultivate values like the duty to hoan my skills and my pursuit of excellence, it was Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, who shaped my personal vision. In my continual pursuit of learning, Musk became one of my favorites sources of information and his philosophy of the “Utility Delta” profoundly influenced my personal vision. The “Utility Delta” states that there are three ways to maximize one’s utility to humanity. First option is to do something that improves the lives of many people, at scale. Uber is a great example, as they have facilitated how millions of people travel. Second option is to

Edwin Espinosa

profoundly impact the lives of a small group of people. Healthcare professionals are a great example as they deeply impact a patient's quality of life. The third option is combining the first and second options to profoundly impact many people. Companies such as Fitbit, WebPT and Medline are great examples as they profoundly help patients, either directly like Fitbit or indirectly like WebPT, at scale. I believe focusing one's career on optimizing one of these "Utility Deltas" maximizes one's utility toward humanity, which in my opinion is the most altruistic career path one can take.

These three ideologies have helped shape my values and personal vision which consequently coincide with some of the core values of Physical Therapy, specifically a sense of duty, pursuit of excellence and spreading altruism. Retrospectively, my values have come through many experiences endured prior to choosing to become a physical therapist; maybe those values of duty, excellence and altruism ultimately lead me to physical therapy as they align with the values I have come to harbor.

I chose to pursue physical therapy because mobility profoundly impacts a person's quality of life. I chose to pursue business to learn how to create sustainable systems that continue helping individuals even without my input. I chose to pursue technology to learn how to help people at scale. This combination of physical therapy, technology and business will be the areas I will leverage to achieve my personal vision to sustainably and profoundly impact as many lives as possible.