

Hello everyone, I have decided to reflect on my year and share the entire journey with you all. It took a lot of courage to share personal information. However, I believe that I will feel better emotionally being honest with you about what has happened in my life behind the scenes in 2018.

I am nervous about opening up to a bunch of strangers on the internet. But I know that sharing my personal experiences are beneficial. You never know what people are going through. If some of the things that I experienced in 2018 can help another person know they are not alone, then I have done my job.

### **Jan.**

Happy New Year! Not. This was the start of a difficult transition for me. I just got my wisdom teeth out a few weeks ago, so I was not in the most pleasant mood. On top of that, I was getting set for a major life adjustment. After spending fall 2017 at Rockingham Community College, the spring 2018 semester would prove to be a significant departure.

I received spring admission to UNC Charlotte, starting in Jan. 2018, after spending a single semester at a community college in my hometown. This did not seem real until we packed the car to leave for the Queen City. How would I survive 108 miles from home? By this point, I had never been away from family for more than 48 hours.

I will never forget the moment when I walked out of my house with everything packed in the car. My mom pulled out of the driveway as I waved goodbye to my grandma. It was tough leaving Reidsville, NC (my hometown) and everything behind. I probably cried for 20 minutes afterwards. How would I adjust to being independent for the first time in my life?

The car ride to Charlotte provided some memories. It was our first time on Interstate-85, using GPS to find a location far away. I will never forget riding in the “fast lane” the entire way to Charlotte. The GPS said that we needed to stay left so my mom listened it. At the time, we were wondering why so many drivers were passing us on the right side with an angry look on their faces. We chuckle about this all the time.

Next, we completed my freshman orientation program. I picked my classes for my first semester at UNC Charlotte and got to learn more about the university. This sounds simple, but trust me, it was a frustrating day. Our Orientation Counselors took us from the Popp Martin Student Union to a building (either Fretwell or Cato) across campus to register for classes. After finishing the registration process, they set us free to find our way back to the student union on our own.

Here's the thing: At the time, I was not familiar with the campus, how to locate certain buildings and it was 32 degrees outside! I tried calling my mom when I got lost somewhere near the band room. Unknown to me, her phone went dead. I was alone in the cold, walking around campus in an unfamiliar environment.

After using Google directions and over an hour in the cold, I eventually found my way back to the student union. To be honest, I got so frustrated and cried a bit trying to find my way. Nevertheless, I did not give up and returned to the original destination. Anyone who knows me understands that “quit” is not a part of my vocabulary. Although this situation may seem minor to some, finding my way back to the student union gave me some confidence.

Move-in day was brutal. Previously, we expected to have some help. Unfortunately, it ended up with my mom and I doing everything. I lived in an old residence hall. This means the elevator was broken. My mom and I were forced to carry all of my belongings up five flights of stairs. I hope that you will never have to carry a refrigerator upstairs by yourself. Luckily, a man felt sorry for us struggling with the microwave, so he helped carry that to my floor.

Moving in to your residence hall for the first time is supposed to be a memorable experience. For me, it was not fun. The best way to describe it: getting punched in the gut and stepped on repeatedly.

I know this is not her fault, but it was starting to get late in the day, and my mom needed to get back before dark. Sadly, for me, this meant we had to dump items from the car onto the floor in my room. She had to leave and I had to set up everything by myself. This was incredibly frustrating after being promised help. Nevertheless, I am not bitter towards those individuals because those tears made me stronger.

This was the first time being on my own. After 18 years, I became an independent young man. I no longer had family in my back pocket. This was my time to grow up and discover myself as a person. The first few weeks of independence were not ideal.

I did not visit the dining hall (Sovi) for first time until a few weeks went by. What's my reason for avoiding the dining hall? This sounds ridiculous but I chose to avoid eating here because there were many people in there. Watching people sitting together with their friends made me feel sadness and anger. It made me miss my friends in Reidsville.

Eventually, I went to the dining hall and realized that I missed out on some amazing food. This was a better option than going to Bojangles for breakfast every morning and Wendy's or The Den for dinner every evening at 5 p.m.

On the bright side, I was a part of a program called SAFE, which connected first-generation college students with resources and support to have a successful transition to life away from home. I got lucky because I made some amazing friends through this program. Also, I joined the school newspaper with hopes of writing about UNC Charlotte students in NASCAR. This gave me something to look forward to on Thursday evenings. I also went to Fan Appreciation Day at the NASCAR Hall of Fame with my friend Jeff. But the highlight of the month was meeting new people.

I remember crying when my new college friends invited me to play pool with them. Nobody ever wanted to hang out with me outside of school back home. This meant the world to me.

### **Feb.**

For the first time, I returned home after being away for a month. It felt so good returning to a familiar environment and sleeping in my own bed. Unfortunately, it only lasted for two days. It was Super Bowl weekend, so it was disappointing not being able to watch it with family.

Instead, I returned to my residence hall and watched the big game with my roommate on television. He had no idea what was going on but cheered anyways. Nevertheless, it was nice watching the game with someone instead of being alone.

My roommate probably enjoyed watching football for a few weeks, instead of NASCAR every weekend until the end of the semester. Anyways, things appeared to be going well. In reality, this is when the problems started.

I struggled being on my own. Loneliness and the uncomfortable feeling of having nobody to lean on really put me in a bad place. I considered the free counseling sessions they provide for students on campus. However, I would have felt embarrassed if anyone knew that I could not handle things on my own.

In all honesty, I wish I went to counseling instead of being afraid how others would view me. I probably would have avoided my upcoming nightmare. As a child, I got teased for being overweight. Heading into my freshman year of high school, I finally slimmed down to a comfortable weight. For the first time in my life, I felt comfortable with my body image.

During this month, I handled my sadness by eating food, particularly sugar cookies. In the dining hall, they have dessert options ranging from various types of ice cream to cookies. There is nothing wrong with eating a cookie every now and then, right?

Please, do not judge my actions. At the time, I believed this was the only way to deal with my emotions. At least five times per week, I ate seven sugar cookies each day. This means that I consumed at least 35 sugar cookies weekly. Imagine how many cookies I ate monthly.

It was a low point in my life. The food helped me escape. But I slowly gained weight and became a member of the “Freshman 15” club.

The most positive thing from this month was meeting NASCAR Next driver Anthony Alfredo in the library. It was a cool experience chatting with a NASCAR driver for the first time face-to-face.

### **March**

While I continued to eat sugar cookies nonstop day-after-day, my declining balance disappeared before spring break. Bojangles, Wendy's and The Den were my favorite places to eat on campus besides the dining hall. This sounds pretty dumb but I thought meal swipes counted at restaurants too. I found out how it worked the hard way.

Eating fast food throughout the week while being addicted to a ridiculous amount of sugar cookies did not help my cause.

Before spring break, my grades were looking good in all of my classes except for my Native American History class. I went to office hours and my professor told me what I needed to do to improve my grade.

Next, I went home for spring break to recharge the batteries before the final stretch of the semester. I returned to campus ready to keep up the good work and improve in the class that gave me trouble.

This month was the beginning of missed opportunities and new ones too. I had a chance to cover baseball for the school newspaper. I have never been a baseball fan and had no interest in the game. Also, I am not familiar with many of the rules in baseball.

Honestly, I regret not taking the opportunity to learn about a new game and expand my portfolio. Despite my current feelings about baseball, I could have taken the time to educate myself. To make this clear, I have nothing against baseball. I respect the game, players and everyone who is involved with it.

Not taking advantage of opportunities to grow during your college years is not smart. Also, I missed another opportunity that I deeply regret. After spending the fall semester covering high school football, I met a guy on the sidelines, who used to work in NASCAR.

He gave me the contact information of a person working in NASCAR during that time. I was supposed to call this person at the beginning of the year. I never made the phone call. Why? I was scared. That's not a good excuse.

A wise person once told me, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you do not take."

From the bottom of my heart, I deeply regret letting fear hold myself back. I wonder how much further I would be career-wise if I made the phone call. It hurts worse because this person is no longer in the sport. A potential opportunity vanished, thanks to my inability to put on a brave face.

If I continue to run scared, then I will spend the rest of my life in Reidsville. My dream to work in the motorsports industry will only be a dream if I do not make an effort to change.

Luckily, my passion for motorsports through social media helped me secure my position with The Podium Finish. I am so grateful for Rob Tiongson giving me a chance to represent his outlet in the motorsports world.

I improved this month, in terms of being independent. But eating an excessive number of sugar cookies continued.

### **April**

With just over a month left in the spring semester, I decided to walk away from the school newspaper. Why not finish out the semester? At the time, I felt that I needed to step away and re-evaluate many things in my life.

I let them down by not doing my part. I should have been more open-minded about certain things. I regret not holding myself accountable in some situations. I failed them and myself. At this point, I did not know if I wanted to continue as a Communications major.

For the rest of the semester, I wanted to just focus on getting my grades in the right place. After putting in some hard work, I brought up my grade in Native American History from a D to a B. This made me feel so good about myself.

At last, I finally felt like something was going right in my life. However, for some reason, I was still eating cookies and gaining weight.

### **May**

I made it to the last day of class! After not knowing if I could make it to the end of the semester mentally, I proved myself wrong and stuck with it. To celebrate, I attended a late-night breakfast in the dining hall with my friends.

Then, I took my first trip on the light rail with some friends to see Uptown Charlotte at night. We went to Epicentre and explored for a bit. After spending some time chatting in a place called Insomnia Cookies, we returned to the light rail and headed back to campus.

A few days later, we returned to the light rail to celebrate a friend's birthday. We went to the historical district known as NoDa. I enjoyed my time eating at this restaurant with delicious Mexican food. I remember briefly watching the Truck race at Dover on my phone during dinner. Fellow UNC Charlotte student Jesse Little was having a fantastic race.

My friends scolded me about not paying attention to the people around me and rightfully so. NASCAR could always wait until later. I needed to give them my full attention, especially since they were so nice enough to invite me to a birthday dinner.

During my life, nobody invited me to things outside of school. It meant the world to me to hang out with a group of people and experience new things. After dinner, we explored the NoDa district. It was a beautiful, peaceful area.

Next, I focused on final exams. Luckily, I did really well in most of my classes. Unfortunately, I did not do well on an exam and it dropped my final grade to a C. This hurt me to the bottom of my heart.

After being an honor roll student my entire life, this was the first time receiving a C as my final grade. I had no idea how to tell my mom about it. I considered lying about it, but I knew that was not the right way to handle it. I decided to be honest and explain what happened.

I have never been good at standardized tests. Studying for hours has never helped me improve. To be honest, my ACT/SAT scores were not good at all. Luckily, UNC Charlotte saw enough in my abilities to accept me to the university.

I learned that we can only try our best. Cs were considered bad growing up.

Like my mentor, Kaleel, told me, "Cs earns degrees."

While I am going to strive for As and Bs during my time in college, I learned to accept that an occasional C is not the end of the world. Finally, it was time to relax for the summer.

At the end of the month, I discovered how serious of an issue I had with my eating habits. Luckily, for me, I was home for the next couple of months, far away from the dining hall with sugar cookies.

My mom asked me to try on all of my clothes, since I had obviously gained weight during the semester. Guess what? I gave away at least 90 percent of the clothes that I owned. I felt embarrassed. I went from being comfortable with my body image to utter embarrassment and disappointment in myself.

The best thing about this month was the potential of me attending the inaugural race weekend at the Charlotte Roval. At this point, I believed this seemed like a longshot, given all of the things that needed to happen, in order to make it all possible.

While I did not know what the future held, I got excited about potentially attending my first NASCAR race in three years.

### **June**

I spent the rest of May reflecting on my first semester away from home. I just needed a break from the world. Some relaxation for a week or two is perfectly fine, right?

Unfortunately, the relaxation period did not do me any favors. I grew incredibly lazy and lacked motivation. I developed some bad habits. Some days were harder than others and I had no explanation.

There were some days when I struggled to get out of the bed. I did not have the motivation to get up. I stayed up until 4 a.m. every single night for no apparent reason. Then, I slept until 2 p.m. in the afternoon.

My days were quite simple: Wake up in the afternoon, eat breakfast, play video games, eat dinner and watch TV until 4 a.m.

I am very ashamed by this behavior. This is not who I am as a person. I made goals to look for opportunities to grow as a person. Unfortunately, this did not happen. While my peers were grinding away, I was struggling to simply get out of the bed and find motivation to do things besides carry out lazy acts.

I had the opportunity to get one article published in the newspaper every week during the summer. Guess what? I wrote less than five articles. For some reason, I lacked the motivation and desire to write. I had no idea what I wanted to do after college anymore.

More missed opportunities to do something productive. I needed to change my ways or my stay at home during the summer will become permanent. All of my hopes and dreams to work in the motorsports world would vanish if I chose to be nonexistent.

### **July**

In the middle of the month, late at night, my mom finally had enough of my lazy habits. She gave me a very blunt response to my actions which left me in tears.

She was right. With summer almost over, I accomplished absolutely nothing besides eat, sleep, watch races and spend lots of time on social media. I was better than this. A bright kid, with an enormous passion for motorsports, who has the potential to be an asset to a company in the future. Why am I letting myself go to waste?

I give my mom a lot of credit for the wake-up call. From this point forward, I got up early every day (except weekends) for the rest of the summer. We went places around town and worked on my self-confidence.

### **Aug.**

Before heading back to school, I made several goals for myself. First, I wanted to limit the number of cookies I ate in the dining hall. I decided to only eat two cookies, three times per week, limiting my intake to a maximum of six cookies per week. This would prove to be a significant improvement, in comparison to an alarming number of 35 cookies.

I also wanted to make more friends on campus. It is a little alarming to know that I would not have any friends if I was not a part of the SAFE program. Next, I wanted to attend my first college football game. Go Charlotte 49ers!

Lastly, I just wanted to get out more and enjoy the Queen City. Throughout my life, I have missed out on some incredible moments because I chose to focus on motorsports. It is great to be passionate about something, but stepping away from it for a bit is also healthy.

Unfortunately, the semester got off to a rough start for me. Unlike previous years, it was incredibly difficult to get my sleep schedule back on track. Staying up until 4 a.m. and waking up at 2 p.m. during most of the summer finally caught up with me.



I had a difficult time adjusting back to waking up at 6:30 a.m. on school mornings. I could not fall asleep until 3 a.m. most nights. Three to four hours of sleep is not ideal. This led to a feeling of numbness throughout my body. Also, experienced some hallucinations for the very first time. It was an unpleasant experience.

I worked harder to improve my sleeping habits when I walked out in the road during a green light for vehicles. I am glad that the driver of a tractor-trailer was paying attention to the road.

On the bright side, this semester, I had my own room in a suite with three other students. They all seemed really nice. One roommate is a foreign exchange student from England. He was very familiar with Formula 1, so we had an instant connection from a racing standpoint. I enjoyed telling him about the American racing culture, while he educated me on the environment in European racing.

Near the end of the month, I attended my first college football game with my friends Jada and Darius. This was an unforgettable experience.

They were calling for thunderstorms, in the evening, ahead of the kickoff. Each time we walked to the stadium, we went into a lightning delay. It was frustrating because we walked all the way from Jerry Richardson Stadium to the student union for shelter numerous times.

Eventually, we got to see some of the game, but left after another lightning delay because of the excessive walking. I will never forget my first college football game. We won the game too! Roll Niners!

Towards the end of the month, I found out that the possibility of me attending Charlotte Roval weekend increased significantly. I had something to look forward to next month. This dream almost got crushed.

### Sept.

A few things happened which put my trip to the Charlotte Roval in doubt. I felt crushed and disappointed. Luckily, my friends Dejah, Kenny and Rob worked hard to figure it out.

In the end, I received a hot pass for the entire race weekend in Charlotte. I am very grateful for those three amazing individuals, who chose to take an extra step to make my dreams become a reality. Their kindness made me feel so lucky to know kind souls.

Speaking of Kenny, I met him for the first time a few weeks before race weekend. We were friends on Twitter for a while, due to our appreciation for motorsports. It was special meeting

someone, who I am proud to call a mentor, friend and the older brother that I never had. I would not have the opportunity to attend the inaugural Charlotte Roval race weekend without him.

In the time before the race, I went to the college football game between the Charlotte 49ers and Appalachian State Mountaineers. The atmosphere was electric. App State fans travel well. I saw more black and yellow in the stands than Niner fans. My two friends and I stayed at the game until halftime (hard to watch) then left.

Finally, it was time to prepare for Charlotte Roval weekend. My first time at the track since spring 2015. I was nervous but anxious to get back to my happy place. However, the weekend started off on an embarrassing note.

I was standing outside of the credentials office waiting for my Hot Pass until someone mentioned that we needed to have our QR codes ready on our phones. This confused me because nobody mentioned that I needed a QR code.

Apparently, I was so excited about the race that I put my mom's phone number in the database instead of my own. Eventually, we figured everything out and I received my Hot Pass.

On Saturday, Sept. 29, I watched my first NASCAR Xfinity Series race from the infield. It was an amazing experience being able to walk from the infield, garage area and pit road. I know it is normal for some people, who do it weekly but it was so cool in my eyes.

Throughout the season, I have seen a lot of criticism of NASCAR'S fan experience on social media. In my opinion, I thought it was decent at Charlotte. It was the best weekend of my life.

After watching Chase Briscoe win the Xfinity race, my buddy Jeff called me and said he was over in the infield hanging out with the family of a famous NASCAR champion. He told me that he knew them personally, but I thought he was just kidding. Later on, I found out that Jeff was telling the truth.

Next thing I know, I am hanging out with the family of seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson while they were grilling some spicy, southern California food. They welcomed me with open arms and I enjoyed sharing my passion for NASCAR with them.

The following day, we got to the track early on Sunday morning. Charlotte Motor Speedway was giving out pace car rides around the Roval. I got lucky and had an opportunity to ride in a pink Toyota Camry pace car with Jeffrey Earnhardt.

We went really fast. Earnhardt was definitely testing the limits! I will never forget everyone in the car yelling, "Turtle!" (Only NASCAR fans will understand).

I never expected to get an actual ride on the track. It was an unexpected but pleasant surprise that I will remember forever. Next, I watched the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series teams prepare for the race on pit road.

During pre-race, I got to walk out to the grid with the cars, drivers and many people. It was packed! Such an incredible atmosphere that reminded me of events such as the Rolex 24 at Daytona. Some people are used to the craziness and excitement before the race but I was completely in awe. I still find it such a privilege to share the same area for a short time with NASCAR's finest.

From watching drivers stand with their families on the grid, to standing beside Chip Ganassi for a few moments, I truly see why being a part of NASCAR is a special privilege which should not be taken for granted.

I watched the start of the race on pit road behind Bubba Wallace's pit box. Then, I went to the crowded infield to watch the majority of the race. With a few laps to go, I decided to head over to pit road to watch the finish. After that, I walked over to victory lane and missed the thrilling finish!

I was so disappointed to miss the contact between Jimmie Johnson and Martin Truex Jr. which helped Ryan Blaney steal a victory. Being there in person and missing the most exciting finish to a NASCAR race in a while really frustrated me for the time being.

Nevertheless, I was thrilled just to be there. Nothing could spoil my dream weekend. The fans were so happy to see a smiling Ryan Blaney pulling into victory lane.

In all honesty, this was my the best time of my life. I really needed this experience mentally. This made me feel so happy to be alive. To be honest, I am not sure when I will be at the track again. Hopefully, someday soon instead of waiting another three years. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the Charlotte Roval weekend like my last ever trip to the track. I am very grateful and appreciative to those who made me the happiest college student in the world.

Speaking of college, my fun time at the track ended and it was time to tackle another issue that frustrated me behind the scenes.

**Oct.**

The previous month seemed like nothing but happiness, right? In reality, I was having another rough time. Luckily, I did not return to my unhealthy ways of eating too many sugar cookies. Instead, I got really depressed and felt defeated. For the first time in my life, I was in jeopardy of failing a class.

For this particular class, I need it to declare my major. Fortunately, they give students two attempts to get a C or higher in the course. However, I wanted to pass the first time. School was always my strongest area. I have never been a bad student. I always made school a top priority over most things in my life.

I did poorly on the first test and the second test was after the “drop period,” which put me in a tough spot. Did I want to stay in the class and bet on myself to get the necessary 350 points to move on? Do I drop it now, save myself the stress and take it again next semester? This forced me to make a decision over fall break.

My mom noticed that I was in a really bad mood. This class was stressing me out. It could determine whether or not I can officially declare as a Communications major. This is the path that I chose. There is not another major at UNC Charlotte that interests me. What should I do?

I was leaning towards suffering through the class because I did not want my family to think of me as a quitter. In the end, my mom assured me to make my own decision and not let the opinions of others influence my decision.

After fall break, I went to my teacher assistant and weighed my options. After some serious thoughts, we both decided that it was best for me to drop the class and take it again in the spring.

I had a difficult time accepting failure. In reality, I did not fail the class. I made the best decision for me personally. The only major con of my decision is I only get one more chance to pass the class or I will be forced to change my major. I am not sure what the future holds if I have to change my career path.

For now, I am willing to bet on myself that I am capable of learning from missed opportunities to be successful in this particular course. I could have done more to ensure that I received the grade to declare my major. Most students are quick to blame the professors. This is not the professor's fault. It is my fault for not giving the extra effort.

In the spring, I am determined to pass next time around. I have no choice.

The best thing from this month was meeting celebrity sports journalist Jemele Hill at UNC Charlotte, after she spoke to students about sports, race and politics.

### Nov.

Dropping the class was a smart decision. I no longer felt depressed or had headaches thinking about the class. It was a massive relief. This gave me more time to focus on my other classes.

I wrote a research paper on NASCAR's history in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. I learned many cool facts about the sport's early days. Apparently, my professor thought it was a decent paper because he gave me an A.

Speaking of NASCAR, as the season ended, I did some self-reflecting on my performance this season. I am proud of my efforts to provide fans with information, analysis and commentary. However, I am very disappointed in myself for not writing enough articles.

Without a doubt, I should have produced more articles. Being a full-time college student or having poor time management skills is not an excuse for the lack of content. I feel like I did not reach my full potential this season.

I could have done a lot more. I had the opportunities to write freely and produce some valuable content. For some reason, I failed to deliver and let people down.

I promise to use the offseason to evaluate myself, figure out ways to be better next season and discover if this is something that I truly want to do for the rest of my life. At the moment, I am not completely sure which career option is best for me. There is still time to figure it out so no worries.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed a nice Thanksgiving break with family. It was awesome seeing loved ones before final exams. I spent Black Friday at Reidsville High School covering a high school football playoff game with the local newspaper.

It was the perfect medicine that I needed before preparing for final exams.

### Dec.

Final exams were not an issue at all. I passed everything with flying colors. I finished the semester with 3 As and 2 Bs. My GPA went up a tad and I am very satisfied.

I only regret studying so hard day-after-day for an exam that I was worried about. I stayed up until 3 a.m. studying and woke up at 8 a.m. to continue. By the day of the exam, I felt too tired and mentally exhausted to focus on it. I still did well on it and finished the class with a B.

For the second-consecutive semester, I grew a lot as a person. I am more independent and not afraid to take a few risks. While I might not be on the same level as many others my age, I am continuing to take baby steps each day. All I ask for is people to take some time to understand that I am who I am and you cannot compare me to others.

During winter break, I reflected on the entire fall semester and 2018 as a whole. Despite some missed opportunities and struggles, I realized that I am a strong-minded person, who is capable of doing incredible things if I can maximize the potential of each situation and stay focused.

I am stronger because of everything that occurred this year. I will learn from my mistakes and improve next year. 2019 is going to be a critical year for my future.

I no longer have time to kill. I must act now and fast to work hard towards the dream life that I envision. It is time to get my life together and move forward.

Without a doubt, I am ready to head into 2019 with a fresh mindset, setting no expectations and just giving my best effort in everything that I do.

### **Lessons Learned in 2018**

I need to start holding myself accountable for my actions. When things do not work in my favor, I should look in the mirror before pointing the finger. At this point in my life, I need to realize that I am responsible for whether or not I am a success or a failure. In 2019, I plan to be completely honest with myself, even in times when I feel that I could have done more in a given situation.

If I need counseling of any sort, I should seek the help immediately, instead of wondering what others will think of me. Anyways, who cares what other people think? Nobody should feel ashamed if they are going through a tough time. It is perfectly fine to reach out to others. There is someone out there who will listen to you. I am very thankful for all of my trustworthy friends, who helped me make it through this tough, character building year. In 2019, I will not hesitate asking for help if I need it.

If I want to continue on this current career path, then I need to work harder and be more serious about it. Lacking motivation is not an excuse. While I am proud of the progress made this year, I

feel that I could be a few steps ahead if I put in some extra effort. Yes, I am very critical of myself. In 2019, I should be all in to improve on all fronts or step aside if this is not for me.

I am capable of being an independent, adult in a large city. I learned the true meaning of “adulthood” this year. New responsibilities and making your own decisions seems scary, but I am proud of how I handled everything thrown my way. In 2019, I will continue maturing and prove that I am capable of doing extraordinary things.

This sounds silly but dropping some grudges from high school. To be honest, I was still bitter at some people I went to high school with earlier in the year. I was either angry or upset with them for various reasons. You know what? Life is too short to hold grudges. I felt much better inside when I let the grudges from the previous chapter disappear. In 2019, I refuse to let little things ruin my happiness.

I will be smarter with my meal choices. For sure, I will never head back to those dark days from early 2018. It was a massive wake-up call. My health should be a top priority. I promise to never put myself in that position again. If I feel the urge to use food as an escape route again, then I will immediately seek the proper help. In 2019, I will make sure that I do not go overboard with the food. Less cookies for me!

Focusing on my passion, school and time for myself is a priority. I need to work on time management. When I am not doing work for school, I am always somewhere following a discipline of racing. I feel bad whenever I miss a race. However, I learned that I do not need to focus on every single race that I can find. Racing will always be here later on. It is ok if I want to go to a college football game with my friends. It is ok if I want to go exploring in Uptown Charlotte on a Saturday, instead of always making a NASCAR race my top priority. I should not feel ashamed for wanting other things in life while pursuing my passion at the same time. In 2019, I plan on finding the right balance and living with pure happiness.

Most importantly, there is more to life than motorsports. For a good portion of my life, I chose racing over everything else which includes family, friends and events. I realized that I hurt people with my selfishness this year. I need to make time for those who care about me. Motorsports is my passion and I love it dearly. But it does not have to define me. In 2019, I will be there for those who believe in me. I plan on limiting my motorsports intake a bit to focus on more important things in life. I want to cherish the little things and avoid missing more memorable moments not related to racing. Life is not all about fast cars. It is about the people in your life.