Set AMBITIOUS goals

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**Quick Career Bio**

I am a Consultant at Ryan, a tax consulting firm. I've been with Ryan since June 2013, and I was actually an intern for Ryan in the Chicago office during the summers while I was at NIU.

With Ryan, I work on a team with other consultants and our manager on issues related to sales and use tax audits for large corporations. Our team specializes in the healthcare industry, specifically healthcare providers in Texas and Georgia. We work on behalf of our clients during the audit process to try to limit their tax assessments and maximize their refunds to get them to a net refund position.

It’s allowed me to learn about the healthcare system, and also helped me to get to know about all the different medical items and crazy technological advances that are being used to treat patients.

I also work on a few manufacturing projects for clients with operations in Arkansas. Our team is considered the subject matter expert on sales and use tax regulations in that state.
I’ve been lucky enough to work for a manager who shared his knowledge and that has allowed us to work on numerous Arkansas audits. We usually get the first offer on these projects, which is nice because you always want to be known for your work product and your ability to deliver. I think our niche allows our team to stand out.

What are three things you want to do in your life?

This is a great question, because it makes you put pen to paper (or in this case keys on a laptop) and force you to be real with what you want out of life. This list is in no particular order:

1. **Travel.** I am lucky enough to travel for work, but it’s hardly to exotic locations. I usually go to Arkansas, Georgia, or Texas. I’d like to go to a lot of different places and experience new cultures. It really can change your perspective on things and give you a new adventure. I would really love to see every Major League baseball stadium because baseball was one of my family’s biggest connections. We all loved baseball and loved going to games together.

2. **Own my own business.** I am a big proponent of creating your own path and future. I think owning your own business allows you to provide jobs for others and value to society. I also think it’s the single best way to create wealth for you and your family, which for me is a huge part of my drive every day.

3. **Write a book.** As long as I can remember, I have been a voracious reader. Novels, business books, biographies, you name it. I have no idea what I would write about, but it seems like a daunting challenge that is worth pursuing.

What makes NIU so special?

NIU is definitely a special place for my family due to the fact that my two older brothers also attended NIU. I have been an NIU fan since I was 10, because in 2001, my oldest brother started at NIU. I also think it’s a great combination of return on investment and education. However, the thing that makes NIU the most special is the people. I met many lifelong friends in DeKalb and had so many great interactions with awesome people who have helped me personally and professionally.

How do you show up in the world every day?

I try to be known for my work ethic. One thing I learned growing up was that whatever you do, you better give 100% or you’re letting people down. I grew up wrestling and if you wanted to be successful in wrestling, you had to practice at home and put in extra effort day in and day out. I try to bring that mentality to my daily life even though I’m no longer an athlete. If you can show people that you will fight on even with a difficult task, you will earn their trust and respect. I want to be known for giving 100% and for being a person you can count on.
Tell us your “Why?”

My “Why” comes back to two things: making my family proud and trying to set lofty goals. My first “Why”—making my family proud—comes from the fact that I have a close family and I am extremely grateful for everything my parents provided for me. Not many things are more satisfying than hearing your family say they are proud. My second “Why” keeps me motivated. If you set ambitious targets, it’s likely you will not achieve 100% of them. Which only means that each day you have a reason to go out and try to hit the target you haven’t hit yet. Once you define your own success and you realize some sort of failure is eminent, it kind of clears your thinking. It allows you to strive for more. And it helps you realize that when you do hit a target, you have done something worth celebrating. I heard this quote from the movie the Trouble with the Curve that sums it up pretty well for me. Justin Timberlake’s character says “As you know, to hit the magical .300, you fail seven out of ten times.” A friend did point out to me that with advanced baseball metrics “.300” isn’t the best any more, but batting average still is important. The point is that if you continue to try to get a hit in every at-bat, you won’t see those seven outs as failure. Because you will have persevered, learned and grown.