

Dear William H. McRaven,

From childhood, I was always taught by the people around me that what I do is “enough,” never “amazing” or “perfect,” just “enough,” and being anything more was never within my reach, just a distant ideal. I was born in California, coming from an immigrant Mexican family that wasn’t given the same opportunities to be more than just “enough” in their lives as others. With the lenient aspects and regulations within Mexico, my mother went through a rough education alongside my uncles, and my father couldn’t even finish elementary school. From their experiences, settling for “enough” was enough, and doing anything more wasn’t necessary. This mindset stained and bled onto upcoming generations in our family, including my cousins, my siblings, and me. With this mindset, my value for my education and myself, in general, was poorly cared for, and I was walking blindly on a meandering path. It’s not like my parents were monitoring my course either, given that we shared the same idea of “enough.” My freshman year began, and that year served as a wake-up call. That year taught me that there were more layers to life than “enough.” I learned so much more; I embraced new experiences; I met many different people; I met someone; and for the first time, I was looking through a new lens with a different idea in my head. Through this newfound lens, I went on to do things I never thought I was in range of doing and try things I was afraid to ever go near. However, my sophomore year this year didn’t start off so smoothly. I found myself sinking, sinking back into old habits, succumbing to apathy, and reverting to the “enough” mindset I resented. Later on, some events had to happen, and some changes were implemented. I’ve never been somewhere so low in my life, to the point where my mindset fell to failure being “enough.” In “Make Your Bed,” you recount your journey through Navy SEAL training. In the first chapter, you go through what you go through every single morning, making your bed, but you treat that as your first accomplishment of the day. Each day of your life will always have you completing tasks you need to do, from small things like chores to bigger things like difficult work. When you’re faced with this long list of tasks, you’re overwhelmed, but by starting your day off with one task already done, even if it seems insignificant, you end up setting yourself up for a more successful day. There were days where I’d wake up and stare at my ceiling for 10 to 15 minutes, preparing myself to do things I wish I could sleep away, which would ultimately be the biggest weight on my shoulders for the rest of the day. Some days I’d be so apathetic that I wouldn’t even change my clothes, and unsurprisingly, I’d feel afflicted and unmotivated doing so and would be in the state of wishing I’d be able to do a certain thing rather than actually doing it. This book taught me to start taking a different turn in my days. I started doing my bed, I’d put on something I liked, I’d make myself something good to eat, and I’d already feel driven to start my day at 8:30 in the morning! Reading your story helped me learn that I can take action on the things I “wish I could do.” You’ve inspired me to take the first step, and I’ve been improving every day since then, and in the end, change starts with me.

Sincerely,

Luz Gaspar- López