

People everywhere enjoy music in a variety of ways. I like to listen and dance to music, but my favorite thing to do is to play it. I wasn't always this way, and the journey I've taken with music has been long but rewarding.

I first started playing the piano when I was four, but I didn't like it at all. It just wore me out. Eventually I only went to see my teacher's cute cat and dog rather than improve my skills, and after a while, I stopped going altogether. I had no interest in playing music for a long time. But on my tenth birthday, all that changed. My friends gave me a ukulele. Looking back now it was a small thing, but for a ten year old girl it was a big, shining, unknown instrument. It seemed like a wonderful thing to me at first, but practicing was so hard. My left hand always felt like it was burning, and I couldn't remember any of the chords. Playing them over and over and over irritated me so much back then. But as the music started coming together bit by bit, I got happier and happier. Learning just one song exhausted me, but at the same time I was filled with happiness. I had fallen in love with music.

Three years later my aunt gave me a guitar. She was going to throw it away because she was moving, but I took it instead. I thought I had a head start because I had been playing the ukulele for a while, but that wasn't the case at all. Tuning was difficult and my hands always hurt. Chords that had been easy on the ukulele weren't easy at all on the guitar, and it was impossible for me to remember them. However, all of my struggles gave me a greater sense of achievement when I overcame them.

This year marks the fourth since I started playing guitar. Now I'm having a lot of fun with my own band, and I'm in the brass band at school where I play the trumpet. Music has done so much for me, and my instruments are more than just pieces of wood. My guitar in particular has been there for me whether I'm up or I'm down. It always makes me feel better. But all of this would be meaningless if I hadn't put in the hard work to learn guitar in the first place.

Even if you buy an expensive guitar, if you don't practice, it'll just become a piece of furniture. This is true of everything because there are no shortcuts in life. Practice, practice, practice! If you want to improve at something, you have to continue to practice and get better, little by little. If you stop practicing or think that you've already practiced enough, it's the same as not practicing at all. Passion alone isn't enough; you have to put in the effort too. Ray Charles didn't become known as the god of soul without putting in hard work. Mao Asada didn't become a three-time world champion in figure skating without endless hours of training. Marie Curie didn't become the first female Nobel Laureate without dedicating herself to the study of radioactivity. It doesn't matter who you are or what you choose to do; all things require practice and effort.

Playing the guitar and ukulele changed my life. I am who I am today because of them, and I'm having a blast. Things would be so different for me if I had given up music completely when I gave up piano. Although it might be difficult or you might want to give up, I promise you that the rewards will be fulfilling if you devote yourself to a passion. Don't just sit around and wait for your skills to improve. You have to keep trying no matter what obstacles you face because, in the end, the return is much more satisfying. So whether it's music like me, or sports or science or whatever else you choose, never stop practicing.