

You have spent the last few weeks contemplating the meanings of a few important words. If we understand that freedom can mean more than “free from external constraints” and can mean “free to be the person I was meant to be” – that can have significant impact on our outlook on life. If work is something that gets in the way of things we’d rather be doing – work reduces our freedom. Rather, if we see work as something empowering, it expands our freedom. Work can be either drudgery or it can be joyful.

An athlete experiences a certain sense of satisfaction (even “joy” and “happiness”) while working hard in the weight room; knowing every single weight they lift is benefiting them; making them freer. A musician may experience the same “joy” while practicing long hours. Someone once said to Yo-Yo Ma “I’d give my life to be able to play like you do” – he replied “I did” (if you don’t know who Yo-Yo Ma is...look him up and listen to a few minutes of his music – hear to what he has given his life). Such people understand that there is joy in the journey; joy in sacrificing for a greater good. They know their sacrifice is not wasted – it has purpose. The hours that they dedicate to their art provides a certain freedom that many people may never know.

Perhaps you already have experienced that sort of freedom, or perhaps it sounds foolish or unattainable. In any case, your reflection for this week is to consider your current journey - the long nights and weekends that you spend doing homework. Can your journey become more joyful and less drudgery with the perspective that freedom can be empowering; that freedom can be more than “free from external constraints”? Consider the saying:

*A train is most free when it is on the rails.*

...write a paragraph or so on the topic of what freedom may mean to you personally as a student.