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I will start my personal essay with the claim that I am not written by AI. Due to previous classes proudly assuming that such mockery would be written by a masterful Homo sapiens such as myself, I claim that this essay is written by me, myself, and I, Adel Marcano. Does that work well as a hook for you? I hope it does, because rather than talking about a boring major and a boring career that sounds AI written, I want to talk about an actual passion that I have. Despite me being in the Cybersecurity major and Information Technology as a minor, I never would have thought that my true passion is game development, and never in my life would I think to call myself a game developer. It may sound foolish, as most old people would assume that I am wasting my life, but I have learned many problem solving skills, learned to overcome difficult challenges, and continued to have a creative mind that pushes me to create a product that not only I enjoy, but that I can share with other people. Sharing my experiences in this way is so fulfilling.

Since I need to advertise what my game is about, let me do that now. I am making a 2D top down turn based role playing game, packed with a plethora of interesting protagonists and memorable antagonists, with the main theme being about family. I am a writer, as you would have already guessed by the way I speak, and I also do programming and coding. Yes, I am used to writing 2,500 word essays every week and even more, so do not even try flagging this as AI generated. This project is my passion, and I promise you that I will take it seriously from this point forward. I did not really think there would be so many little moving parts that go into making a game. In my opinion, I think making a game is the greatest expression of creation. You

are building an entire universe, where all things function according to the things you have created. Thankfully, as the owner of my own soon to be company, I work with creative minds and people, musicians and voice actors, and anyone with a passion for creating games. Team morale is something I have learned to strive for, even when it does not directly benefit the game. Building connections is something that I have learned to achieve. With their talents, I can use their assets and begin the coding and programming.

I do my coding in C#, which is commonly used in the engine Unity. I have learned that coding itself is not actually hard, but rather, it is the problem solving aspect of it. You can approach a system in so many different ways, but what is the most effective and efficient way of handling that system? An easy example would be movement. If you wanted to move the player, the X and Y axes would change, and the animations would change depending on the position. Or every time you press the WASD keys, you would move and control the animations that way. But then problems arise with cutscenes, and scenarios where players move by themselves without any input, and so you need to find ways to fix the problem with a system you spent so much time making. Sometimes it takes weeks to even find the problem, but eventually, it has never failed me that I find a method that works. I have learned to be perseverant in my methods and find workarounds without having to cheat. Most of the coding I do is creating systems, which is the programming side of my code. My battle system script alone is over 1,000 lines of code, and that does not even cover the over 10 other scripts for targeting enemies, handling health and stamina, and moves and skills. When a problem occurs in one script, all the other scripts are affected. Even the craziest and smallest things like the camera would crash the entire battle. Precision and attention to detail are crucial for the work that I do. If there is anything that I can take from my

time coding and programming into Cybersecurity, it is that I continue to always find better ways to solve a problem.

Sometimes, the answer could be in your face, and I think overloading your brain constantly is definitely a common problem that I and many others probably struggle with. Too many times, I get headaches and even code in my sleep, just to solve the problem. My passion has led me to think critically, and also look at things with a framework mindset. It would be easy to say that the player attacks the enemy and an animation plays. But you need to think about the turn order, the damage calculations, the health, the speed and movement of the animation, and when the player's turn even ends. And how would the player know what to attack or what counts as an enemy? So many moving parts for something so simple, and many people do not realize how much work goes into it. I have currently spent two years working on these systems, and there have been times where I have lost my passion and hope.

It is certainly not easy. It feels like I have been doing so much work for such a little outcome. It is hard to describe the feeling, but even though this is my passion, I do not think this type of work is for me. The real difficulty is maintaining a want and a need to keep going. Why am I doing this? What purpose is this for? Will this even work? Will anyone even care? Many worries come to mind, but one thing I am happy about is that I am not alone in this project. I have talented people, even popular ones, who want to help and support the project. I am grateful for the skills that I have learned, and being able to relate with others, both the struggles and desires. Even if I were to stop, people I call friends would not do so. I do this as a way to keep not only my passion going, but theirs too.

You may wonder what all this has to do with Cybersecurity. Well, I have done small coding here and there with Linux, and virtualization. I have created small 256-bit encryption

keys using Python in Command Prompt. I mention all this because, while I do not think those are huge accomplishments, I have created for myself a mindset that always pursues problem solving. Every time I find something I cannot do, I check every possible chance and explore outside factors that could be the cause. A lot of the work Cybersecurity specialists do is just that. We may not know where the problem originated or what holes an attacker may try to penetrate, but preparing for the attack and mitigating the damage from the attack is the name of the game. So I can confidently say that my passion has helped me, and will continue to be an anchor moving forward as I finish my degree in Cybersecurity.