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skyscrapers reaching the ceiling — or a spaceship made from paper clips and erasers. While I might not have always succeeded in fulfilling all my crazy ideas, at the very least, I always carried an unflinching sense of determination. When I was creating, there was one rule I lived by: No matter what I was making, or what the outcome was—if I crafted until my heart was content, I could achieve anything.

I remember my teacher in third grade, Ms. Carrasquillo. She would always have the most amazing items on her desk. One day while I was doing classwork, a particular object caught my attention. It was a huge rubber band ball. I was completely awestruck. After seeing all the vibrant colors combined into one, I decided to satisfy my curiosity and ask my teacher how I could make one. Without hesitating, she kindly taught me two simple steps and gave me a bag of rubber bands to take home.

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The first step in creating a rubber band ball is making

Continue to overlap the rubber bands and then...Ta-da, you have a rubber band ball!

You might be wondering why I'm speaking about an object that I used to make when I was a kid, and as I reflect on my fascination with this sfa<sup>a</sup>

I say this because our beings are similar to the core of the rubber band ball. Both are a testament to our individuality and one of the most fundamental pieces of what makes each of us different. From your musical tastes, to your stance on Thorne or Moulton,

Other experience bands may have been late nights chatting in Smith Union with friends, getting gelato with your Bowdoin host family, or even just pretending to do work on the quad on a beautiful sunny day. And if any of you claim that you were able to get work done on a nice day on the quad, I will just assume that you're lying.

Regardless, the friends that became family, finding our chosen communities, and gaining exposure to our academic circles were all reasons why we came to Bowdoin - and our quest to add great experience bands was our driving force. College was confusing, but no matter what experiences we had or what the outcome was, we all continued crafting until our hearts were content.

While there were many firsts and great times, there were also tough moments while navigating Bowdoin. Imposter Syndrome probably ravaged many of us, which is the feeling that you are not capable or good enough even when you are. That feeling tainted many parts of my experience bands while at Bowdoin. Even more excruciatingly difficult for me was losing one of my best friends, Max, who passed away from a heart attack and marked by confusion, sadness, and grief.

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end of the day, you are who you are. And whenever you might feel doubt or uncertainty, remember that no matter the outcome, if you keep crafting until your heart is content, you can achieve anything.