

Part I
5:

All of us make decisions daily. Most of these decisions are unimportant--what to wear, what to eat, where to go Friday night--in terms of long-term effects. Sometimes though a decision presents a real dilemma because of its possible consequences: entering the service before going to college, playing high school sports or working after school, ending a relationship.

In your essay tell about a time when you or someone you know faced such a dilemma.

Make sure you describe the dilemma and the consequences or the way in which the decision was made with specific details.

To Be OR Not To Be

"I--I don't think that's such a good idea, Jacob." I remember laughing a little to myself when I heard my dad say those stuttering words through the phone. I had just told him I had all but decided to change my major to merely a BFA in musical theatre instead of my double major in theatre and biology. For two years I had muddled around with trying to double major, trying to have a backup in case the whole theatre thing didn't work out, but during my junior year I had finally reached the conclusion that theatre was something I had to pursue. It wasn't something I wanted to do. It was something I needed to do if I was going to be happy. I had been struggling with the decision of choosing a definitive major for years, but it took me three years to finally know which direction to take with my life.

In my senior year of high school I had declared the illustrious major of Pre Med. I was intelligent, finishing at the top of my class and loved science. Therefore, to me, Pre Med seemed like the logical choice; however, I never anticipated what happened two months before high school graduation: I got a lead in my high school's musical. I had always had an interest in acting and decided to give auditioning for the spring musical a shot. The month of rehearsal and performance proved not only that I could do theatre but also that I enjoyed it. Every night for four days I was able to go on stage as Moonface Martin in my high school's production of *Anything Goes* and make audiences full of a few hundred parents and community members laugh hysterically. I enjoyed it so much that I declared to the student advisor who was helping me through my First Step orientation that my major wasn't Pre Med anymore but a double major with a BA in theatre and a BS in biology.

This was the beginning of a long journey of self discovery. Throughout my freshman year I took contrasting classes such as "Organimal Biology" and "Class Voice for the Stage." "Why are you majoring in theatre AND biology?" asked Kenn Stilson, the then chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance. I had heard this all before. Obviously my majors had nothing to do with each other and seemingly there was no reason to pair them together. I lied to Kenn, and many others, and told them "I just like them both." Honestly, I was afraid of pursuing just theatre. What if I could never get an acting job? I needed something to fall back on. So, I lied to everyone and just plodded along. One Friday morning of my junior year I remember sitting in th last row of chairs closest to the door in the lecture hall of Rhodes building and listening to Dr. Taylor explain how

to use a formula in order to track fluxes in the moose population of Alaska. It hit a resonance in my brain. I found all of this interesting, but suddenly, I imagined myself in a research facility in Alaska punching numbers trying to figure out how many moose were roaming free through this or that national park. I cringed inside. That was not what I wanted to do with my life. I went to the biology office that day and dropped my biology major. Meanwhile, my theatre career was starting to flourish. I had learned to sing thanks to our department's relentless voice teacher Judith Farris. My life changed with this discovery. I loved to sing.

Suddenly, theatre wasn't as scary. I could act, I could sing, I could somewhat dance. And now I had the time to build these talents, to solely focus on them. For years professors like Kenn and Judith had said, "You can't have a backup with theatre," and I knew why. Theatre takes so much time. Hours spent memorizing this monologue or that song. Days learning this dance routine or that scene. There's no room for anything else; you had to throw yourself at theatre and tackle it with everything you had, otherwise you weren't an actor; acting was merely a hobby. The rest of my junior year was spent tirelessly working to be better. As a result, I got two leads that year, one being the main character in SEMO's production of *The Pajama Game*, Sid Sorokin. In April of my junior year I made an even bigger step to dedicating myself to theatre and changed my BA in theatre to a BFA in musical theatre. The achievements of my junior year showed me that if I did throw myself at this, I could be successful.

My decision took essentially three years to make but I've found my passion life. I'm sure the life I've chosen won't be easy by any means. I won't be surprised if more hard decisions pop up to try and steer me from my dream of being on Broadway, but even my dad managed to his words when I took the box as Sid Sorokin at the Saturday night performance of *The Pajama Game*. "You did such an amazing job last night that I had to see it again," were the words he greeted me with after the show.