

When I found out I did not pass the bar, I was devastated; I let down myself and seemingly my family, my girlfriend, mentors, and everyone who had invested in me -- how would I recover from this professionally and personally? But, I couldn't lament for too long because sign ups for the next exam were quickly approaching and sulking in my feelings wouldn't help me get over this challenge. And so, while emotionally very raw, I signed up hoping this next time would be better -- knowing I had to dig really deep in myself, confront the fears that I've watered, extinguish them, and rebuild healthier thought patterns to get over this exam.

Over my time re-studying for the exam, two thoughts persisted: "No...no, this is not how my story ends! I am not a failure or a quitter... I've never quit and why would I do it now? No...I have more in the tank"; and the other was, "what if this repeats again...is it better to just take the foot off the gas? There are many people who understand how difficult this exam is...maybe I should use my degree for something adjacent." And then it hit me: rather than dwell in either thoughts, why don't I check myself and focus on what's in my control; instead of feeling good or bad, just be present and do the work. I know it's easier said than done, but constantly being present was key. On the days when it was tougher to stay present, I would reach out for guidance -- and **here** was a shift.

I first met Brian as the author of Magic Sheets + Approsheets (from a friend) and learned more about him after reading his blog posts/stories he shared from former students. I felt he connected with his students, cared for his students, and wanted them to succeed. So, I emailed Brian about my situation hoping for validation from someone who had been through what I was going through. Safe to say that email changed the trajectory of my studies and developed a relationship I am so grateful for to this day.

Brian read my email, responded tenderly, and left me with hope. Additionally, he pointed -- did NOT shove nor plug -- to his resources that were incredibly helpful. But, here is the main point: Brian's essence isn't necessarily his material -- at least for me it wasn't -- but his ability to connect with strangers who feel forgotten/ashamed of themselves because of how this exam robbed us of our confidence. Brian has been to the deepest depths of really tough feelings, rebuilt himself, and discovered that this exam is passable with a more fine-tuned approach, hard work, and constant assurance that it will be okay.

Over the course of my studies, I looked forward to his weekly email as a nice break and left feeling inspired that I could pass this exam. Rather than externally validating myself or confirming my fears from neurotic strangers on reddit, Brian's weekly emails and his personal emails with me allowed me to rediscover myself as someone who won't quit, reframe this

challenge as possible, and collect the wisdom in this temporary road block for tougher challenges down the road. In short, I was able to internally validate myself.

About a week before the exam, I was feeling my best ever and my studies showed: I plowed through MBE practice questions, learning *rather than* seeing if I got it right and comfortably essay cooking 4-5 essays. But, I was still insecure since I never felt this good. I emailed Brian and he advised me not to gauge my readiness from “feelings,” but to be aggressive on game day and “arrogant” in collecting points. It blew me away because it placed my focus on an attitude I could control instead of this “feeling” of confidence that I couldn’t. I was studying at an arm's length with the material for so long and now Brian injected me with the mindset I needed to go into this exam.

When I found out I passed and reflected on my journey, I realized a more focused approach was critical, but the change I needed was a reshifting of perspective and learning to trust myself. Brian gave me the confidence I needed in myself and coached me every step of the way despite his busy schedule as an attorney. I understand this exam is different for everyone and there are so many reasons to quit, but as Brian recently told me, “good news is inevitable” and I am glad I didn’t allow the last exam to define my story; my story continues knowing that I passed and I did not quit! Cheers to Brian and every single person reading this because we can do this!