

Silicon Valley Pressure: Stories from the Valley

Student Interview

How does growing up in Silicon Valley affect how you view success?

Although I was not born or raised in Silicon Valley, the renowned companies and success stories from this core of technology have had a significant impact on me, inspiring my dream to pursue a career and studies in the field of computer science. Under the name of “Silicon Valley,” where groundbreaking innovations and exceptional talent seem to emerge daily, I found myself nurturing a vision shaped by the constant evolution of technology and its potential to redefine humanity's progress.

With that dream in mind and standing at a crossroads in life, I found the courage to make a transition toward computer science even though I have earned my BA degree with Communication Studies. Yet, it did not take long after taking my first steps into the world of technology to begin questioning whether success in Silicon Valley is always as simple or guaranteed as it often appears.

I believe that the spotlight on success stories sometimes blinds people to the incredible effort and sacrifices behind the people who contributed to the success. The process, which is often hidden from view, is equally, if not more, important than the outcome. I was no exception, and I believe many others who are just starting out in this academic or professional space may also approach these bright Silicon Valley stories with idealized expectations of success.

However, I do not see this as a negative influence. In fact, I believe that the desire and hunger for a dream, even when met with the harshness of reality, can give birth to new ambitions and even stronger motivation. Without action, dreams remain fleeting stories that pass through our lives. Just like a child learning to walk, falling and standing up again until they grow into adulthood, our thoughts become reality through challenge, and reality can eventually become our dream fulfilled.

While I have only just begun my journey in Silicon Valley, this is what I reflect on how this place has shaped—and reshaped—my understanding of success.

Interactive Tech Timeline

- 2006 - Had first mobile phone
- 2007 - First interaction with the C language through a coding class
- 2010 - Created First Facebook account
- 2011 - Had the first Android OS based phone
- 2012 - First interaction with computer assembly & disassembly

- 2013 - First C++ course at the university
- 2014 - First participated in creating a program with the C++ language
- 2018 - First interaction with Python & Kali Linux OS
- 2024 - First course with Java language
- 2025 - Advanced Java course & Intermediate level Python coding

Story Showcase Platform

Tags: Burnout, Tech Pressure, Identity

When I transitioned from Liberal Arts into the world of computer science, I expected a learning curve—but I didn't expect how much time I'd spend just staring at a screen, trying to figure out why my code wouldn't run.

Sometimes it's a missing bracket. Sometimes it's a typo buried deep in a loop. Either way, there are nights when I spend 2–3 hours on a single error that seems like it should have taken five minutes to fix. During those moments, I sometimes felt light-headed and the self-doubt creeping in, the voice in my head asking, "Am I even meant for this?"

I come from a background where success used to be measured in ideas and discussions. Now, success feels like it hinges on whether my program compiles without crashing. It's sometimes exhausting, and some days I feel burned out.

But what I'm learning is that this frustration doesn't mean I'm not cut out for tech—it just means I'm still adjusting. Burnout doesn't always mean failure. Sometimes it's just a sign that I care enough to push through. And slowly, I'm learning to step back, breathe, and give myself the same patience I once gave to my essays and art.



Final Reflection

Through this project, I was able to re-affirm the clarity of my goals and dreams once again. I came to deeply realize that many others will also be pursuing their dreams while managing burnout with the intensely competitive environment. Everyone has their own strength, drawbacks, and unique timelines shaped by their life experiences. Considering all of this, this project helped me appreciate not only my own journey into tech but also the strength to keep going on, especially when the path is not always clear.