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This I Believe

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I believe in the difference between existing and living. Existing is defined as “to achieve the basic needs of existence, as food and shelter” whereas living is defined as “having life; being alive; not dead.” The majority of people may see these two words as synonyms in terms of grammar, but I see them as complete opposites in terms of philosophy. The definition of existing brings up the vital point in my belief. When you are existing, you settle for the basic things you need in life. You work a job because it will give you financial security. You buy a house because you need a place to live. You follow the same routine day after day because you know it provides the basic things you need in life. Existing without a doubt gets you through life – and if you are happy with existing, then by all means, keep on doing it. However, if you are feeling like there could be more to life than just existing, I recommend you try living. When you are living, you do things because you want to do them, not just because you have to in order to survive in this world. You don’t just work a job because it pays well; you work a job because you love it and could not picture doing anything else in life. You buy a house because it is the house of your dreams, not because it meets your basic shelter needs. You don’t follow the same routine every day because you have to; you do what you love every single day with the biggest smile on your face. I recognized this difference the day I joined my college’s radio station. When I first came to college, I was a history major with an education intent – the plan I had since before I graduated high school. On paper, being a teacher sounded great to me and people said I would make a great teacher. At first I was excited about becoming a teacher. When I actually got to college, however, I realized that I was becoming less and less excited about being in education. As I was walking across campus thinking about what the hell I wanted to do with my life, I saw a flier that said the radio station was having a recruitment meeting that night. “Wow, how cool would it be to be in radio!” I remember thinking as I read the flier. I decided to check it out; what did I have to lose? At the meeting, I got so excited just hearing everyone talk about the opportunities available with radio and how great it was to be a part of that station. I joined that night after the meeting, and I remember thinking how happy I was to start that new part of my life. That’s when I knew that up until that point, I was existing. I was planning on doing something because it would be good for me to do, not because I was passionate about it. Once I started doing things at the station, I found my passion. I then changed my major and really started living my life the way I wanted to live it. There is not a day that goes by that I’m not grateful for my “existing” phase. If I hadn’t gone through that, then I wouldn’t know what it was like to really live and be happy with the decisions I make. Now I’m confident that when I’m older, I won’t just have a job for financial stability; I’ll have a career I am passionate about. I won’t follow the same routine every day because I have to; I’ll wake up every day with a smile knowing that I’m living the best life I can. As I said before, if you are happy with existing, then go ahead and stick with it. Just know that the living side of the scale is pretty freaking awesome, and that it is just waiting for you to read that flier on a walk across campus.