Throughout most of my life so far, one phrase can be used to describe me until a year ago: all over the place. Mood swings and anger constantly. Frustration every time things went wrong. Depression and bad days multiple times a week. It got better over time but it wouldn't be until a certain experience that things would finally reach the peak.

It's generally regarded that college is one of the most important aspects of becoming a functioning member of society. My experience as a college film major was rocky to say the least. My first two semesters were great; My second two were terrible. Most of it was caused by a dysfunctional toxic relationship. However, since that time, I have been able to learn from my mistakes and reflect. It came to me suddenly. A code of three rules that living by has provided me more happiness day to day than ever before. This is what the code is.

1. Expect Trouble so You Don't Get Caught Off-Guard
   Life will always find a way to get in your way. Your car could get totaled. Maybe a family member passes away. You lose your job. Perhaps you break a bone. You never know what life will throw at you. However that doesn't mean you shouldn't expect these things to happen. Life is unpredictable. You'll never know what it has in store for you next. But if you open your mind to expect anything to happen, it will be less of a shock when it does happen.

2. Choose What You Care About.
   Life is messy and there will always be people and problems that need attention. However, just because there are a lot of problems in the world doesn't mean you should sacrifice every ounce of your mental and emotional state to worry about it all. Be real with yourself. You have a limited amount of mental and emotional energy you can spend; Spend it wisely. Don't worry about things you aren't actively investing yourself in. If your brother's roommate's aunt's best friend who lives 1200 miles away has a cold, leave it to the people it affects immediately. Of course, it's always appreciated to pass on sentiments and sympathies, but don't waste your energy on a problem you can't invest yourself in.

3. Always Strive for a Positive Attitude.
   The base for the other two rules to work is maintaining a positive attitude. Staying positive is the key to happiness. How can you be truly happy without a positive mindset? Easy answer, you can't. Having a positive attitude, even through the negativity, will give you strength you otherwise wouldn't have. Not only that, but keeping positive will begin to close the doors to those negative situations and open doors to positive ones. Mindset is important.

After committing myself to this code, my life turned around. I'm not stressed since I don't worry about a million things I didn't need to. When bad things happen, I'm not as flustered or upset by it. Day to day, I feel a lot more upbeat and happy than I used to. If you find you tend to be stressed out, easily upset, or just down and out, these three rules are an excellent starting point for change.

Word Count: 541
Halved: ~270

Cut in Half + Gary Provost

Most of my life can be described with one word: scattered. Mood swings and anger constantly. Frustration every time things went wrong. Depression and bad days frequently. It improved gradually but it wouldn't peak until recently.

Most would say college is essential to truly growing up. My experience in college says otherwise. My first two semesters were great. Second two were terrible. Since then, I've been able to learn and inflect. I've developed a code of rules that living by has improved my happiness tenfold.

1. Expect the Worst.
   > Sometimes life impedes you. Your car could get totaled. Maybe a family member passes away. You lose your job. Perhaps you break a bone. You'll never know what's in store for you next. That doesn't mean you shouldn't expect the worst. If you open your mind and expect all outcomes, you won't be as shocked when the worst happens.

2. Choose What You Care About.
   > Life is messy and there are always things that need attention. That doesn't mean you should worry about all of them. You only have so much energy; Don't waste it on things you can't solve.

3. Stay Positive.
   > Positivity is the key to happiness. Having a positive attitude constantly will strengthen you. Positivity closes the doors to negative situations and opens doors to positive ones.

After committing to the code, my life turned around. I'm not stressed since I don't worry about unnecessary things. When bad things happen, I'm not as shocked. I feel a lot more upbeat and happy than I used to. If you're easily stressed or upset, this code is an excellent starting point for change.

Cut it in Half:
1. What's the biggest thing about this exercise that surprised you?
   a. The biggest thing that surprised me was how much could be trimmed out while maintaining the message. I didn't think I could get down past 350 from 541, but I managed to do it.
2. Which post is better, and what's the biggest reason why?
   a. All in all, I would say the revised version of this post is better. It gets down to the point cleanly and efficiently.
3. Based on what you learned in this exercise, what's the biggest thing you're going to take away and apply to your future blog post writing?
   a. The biggest take away for me going forward will be to keep in mind what is necessary and unnecessary when conveying a message in blog posts.

Gary Provost:

1. Do you like the new version better? If so, why?
   a. Yes, it's more concise and gets straight to the point. Necessary information only.
2. What about this can you replicate in your blog posts in future?
   a. I can use shortened sentences to warm up or cool down and enforce some of my points that go in the longer sentences.