

## Even Rockstars Can Make a Difference By Vance Ginn, Ph.D.

There's much to every person's journey. Mine has many cycles that made me the man I am today. Here's a key cycle that highlights a peak, trough, and subsequent peak.

I was a drummer for a hard rock band "Sindrome" from about 1998-2001. Our influences were bands like Tool, Korn, and Deftones. We had concerts at venues like Fitzgerald's, the Mausoleum, Engine Room, and several others in Houston. We recorded one 10-song cd (unfortunately, I don't have a copy). It was a blast!

(Pictures below: first is with one guitar player on my right and the singer on my left and second is of me rocking the drums at a show in Lake Jackson.)



I was definitely living the "rockstar" life, which I would say I was not heading in a good direction. After not caring much about the direction of my life, I was in a major car accident on May 25, 2002 that changed all that. God certainly has a way of waking us up.

I was the passenger in a 2002 Acura RSX that my friend had purchased only days before. Being young and *stupid*, my friend started racing another car on the I-10 frontage road near Katy. The last time I looked at the speedometer we were going 120 mph! An SUV exited the highway and pulled into our lane. We clipped their back end, rolled/flipped at least six times, and skidded upside down for about 40 yards (see pic below). I was the last one to wake up and exit the car.



I was sent by a life-flight to Hermann Hospital in Houston with possible head trauma. By the grace of God, I had no serious injuries (or maybe the hit to my head is what got me interested in earning a doctorate in economics) and was released that night.

I laid in bed for about a month with deep contusions all over, black eyes (see pic), and went to physical therapy for two months. During that time, I had plenty of time to pray about the direction of my life. After much prayer, I believe God woke me up to His gift in my life of helping others.

I took my first economics course at San Jacinto College the previous semester and found it fascinating. It made sense. It was a way to explain how people act in a complex world. I decided to use it as a tool to help others—through less government and more personal liberty, of course!

I gave up the "rockstar" life and was redirected through Christ as a person with His direction for my life, care for whether I lived or died, and purpose to help others. After desiring to be a first generation college graduate (dad had epilepsy and went three years at Sam Houston State University before having to drop out and mom took a few classes but didn't graduate), an associate's degree was my initial goal. Twelve years later, I walked across the stage at Texas Tech University and was awarded my doctoral degree in economics (pics are of my mentor Dr. Ronald Gilbert hooding me at graduation and Emily (wife) at graduation).



Today, I have a beautiful family and work at the Texas Public Policy Foundation where I attempt to make a difference in people's lives every day. Life is truly an amazing blessing. Make every moment count; you never know when it will be your last.



**Moral of the story: Even "rockstars" can make a difference! #LetPeopleProsper**