

Soundtrack to Your Life
Make a Creative Piece

I regret only being able to attend 3 of the required 4 events for the Anti-Racism in Health Care certificate but completing the Asano certification program has been an incredible experience this year. Soundtrack to Your Life was a fun and powerful experience listening to music with others, and hearing stories. Learning about each other through music can connect us and reveal our vulnerabilities and bring us closer. Everyone on the Zoom call shared meaningful songs and the personal stories behind them. We listened to the songs and stories while reflecting, journaling, and creating original works. I shared the story from song #3 below. Music has played an incredible part of my life; these 5 songs are a slice of the musical pie that is the soundtrack of my life.

1. “Wasted Words,” The Allman Brothers Band, *Brothers and Sisters*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTcJe9J-uB8>

Family lore says that when I was an infant my parents would put me in a baby swing, turn on *Brothers and Sisters* and let me joyfully kick myself to sleep. Apparently, it worked every time. I have no memory of this, but I like this song.

2. “Fight The Power,” Public Enemy, *Fear Of A Black Planet*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmo3HFa2vjg>

Public Enemy changed my life. There is so much history, wisdom, and teaching in 5 minutes of this song; it opened my eyes and mind through lyrics and references profound and pointed. Chuck D speaks truth to power and slams accepted notions of right and wrong. In the days before the internet, I would visit the library to research Chuck’s lyrics in encyclopedias and the green-covered Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature and have my consciousness expanded.

“Fight the Power” was voted class song for my graduating class in high school, but the principal refused to allow it to be played at graduation. Instead, the official class song is listed as “Winds of Change” by Scorpions. Terrible. It was later discovered that the principal was having an affair with the married superintendent of the school district, and they fled the state together, but that was years after she canceled “Fight the Power.”

3. “Shake It Off,” Taylor Swift, 1989

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfWlot6h_JM

I was grocery shopping after a difficult breakup and in the frozen food aisle I heard these words playing over the public address speakers, “Just think, while you’ve been gettin’ down and out about all the liars and the dirty, dirty cheats of the world, you could’ve been getting’ down to this sick beat.” And I burst out laughing! I had never heard “Shake It Off” or Taylor Swift before (Shocking, I know!), but I became an instant Swiftie!

4. “Blackened,” Metallica, ...*And Justice For All*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUZVXtDVrc0>

A heavy metal song about environmentalism! YES! I thought about this song when I attended Dr. Britt Wray’s presentation on finding hopefulness in an era of climate change. This song is not particularly hopeful, but it is absolutely powerful!

I discovered Metallica late. In high school I only listened to hip-hop (see #2 above) and eschewed heavy metal. I’ve been playing catch-up ever since. “Blackened” has a special place in the Metallica catalog for me because knowing this song was the key to winning Metallica tickets. Using a landline at my first job after college, I called the local rock radio station (94.1 WYSP) and asked, “What do I have to do to get Metallica tickets?” They could have told me to

go buy tickets, they could have said, “You have to be the X caller,” or they could have simply hung up. They didn’t. The DJ asked, “How big of a Metallica fan are you?” I told them, “Huge.” They said, “If you can name this song, we’ll give you tickets.” The DJ read lyrics, and I yelled, “Blackened!” and won tickets to see Metallica.

“Blackened is the end.”

5. “This Year,” The Mountain Goats, *The Sunset Tree*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ii6kJaGiRaI>

It’s impossible to separate my educational program from my life and my life from its soundtrack. “This Year” has played in my head many, many times during this fast-paced one-year FACT-1 nursing program. Every exam, every clinical, every medication administration, every wound dressing change, every catheter bag measured and emptied has brought me closer to my goals and graduation in May 2023.

The facilitator urged us to “be intentional with the music in your life.” Nine days after graduation I am seeing The Mountain Goats in concert. “I am going to make it through this year if it kills me.”