

# Hooked on Video Games

*Kyle Dougherty*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** What does it mean to be “hooked” on something? What are you hooked on?

Playing video games has been an important part of my life. I have been playing video games since I was six years old and now, at 19, I still play video games. I don’t plan on stopping anytime soon. For my entire life, I have struggled with depression, anxiety, and ADHD. Video games have helped me deal with these issues unlike anything else. No matter what, it has always been a treat to come home after a stressful day and unwind with some video games.

## Getting Started at Age Six

As a six-year-old, my first experience with video games was watching my older brother play them until one day (after annoying him enough) he passed me the controller. It was “Halo 2” for the Xbox, and it was the first time I felt the joy of playing. The fun of seeing the explosions on the screen, the thrill of sneaking around and finding better futuristic weapons on the map, and the motivation of trying to get my score higher

---

**I have struggled with depression, anxiety, and ADHD. Video games have helped me deal with these issues unlike anything else.**

---

than my brother’s all led to me being hooked on video games. I didn’t know it at the time, but this was the beginning of a 13-year “addiction” to gaming.

On my seventh birthday, I got a Nintendo GameCube along with three games for it. As someone who struggles every day with ADHD, I find it difficult to pay attention to anything for more than five minutes. However,



when I was playing these games, I could easily sit for hours on end — never losing focus. Catching ghosts in “Luigi’s Mansion” fascinated me and gripped my attention. I remember zooming across the racetracks in “Mario Kart” with my brother as we jammed to the catchy soundtrack. And I loved staying up all night with him in our attempt to unlock all the characters in “Super Smash Brothers.”

## Meeting My Best Friend through Xbox

When I was about ten, I got an Xbox 360. This was the console of all consoles at the time, and I was obsessed from the moment I got it. One of my favorite games for this console was “Halo: Reach,” which I would play with my best friend at the time, Stevie. We both loved video games, and we stayed up for hours every night playing any game we could get our hands on.

Stevie and I spent nearly eight years playing video games together almost every night on Xbox Live, until we eventually met up in real life and got an apartment together.

## Leaving Our Kid Years Behind

As roommates, we still played video games, but not as much. We spent more time working jobs to pay rent, being in relationships, taking road trips, and hanging out in real life. We had to start acting like adults. I was 18 going on 19; he was 22 going on 23. Our kid years were behind us and the ugly, grimy face of adulthood was ominously staring right in our eyes. That same year, we both ended up having to sell our video games and consoles in an effort to pay rent. I got \$60 for my Xbox One, which I originally bought for about \$250.

I still remember the Gamestop employee asking me if I wanted cash or store credit and Stevie making a joke about paying our rent with Gamestop store credit. He was like that. I think Stevie had a better grip on adulthood than I did, I eventually had to move back in with my parents after the burden of it all became too much.

## Grateful for Video Games

I'll always remember the transition I made to adulthood by selling all my video games and Xbox One. Eventually we all reach a point when we have to come to terms with the stark reality of adult life. But I am still thankful for everything that has come into my life through playing video games. I'm thankful for the time shared with my brother as a young pup, for all the friends I made through online gaming, and for the real-life friendships forged through a love of video games.

If it had not been for video games, I don't know where I would be right now. Even though I was struggling with an overwhelming amount of disorders in my brain, video games were always there to put a smile on my face. As life slowly becomes more complex and I take on more responsibilities, I know I can't just sit down with my GameCube and tend to my "Animal Crossing"



town like I used to when I was seven. There's not enough time for it anymore. Despite that, I still find time every now and then to play a game.

No matter how old you get, you still have to make some time for play. The stress of life takes a toll. It's good to take care of yourself by playing. Whether play for you is board games, card games, instruments, football, skateboard, or swing set, or being with your cat, dog, or child, take some time out of your day and play. Video games are my choice. What's yours?

---

**That same year, we both ended up having to sell our video games and consoles in an effort to pay rent.**

---

### AFTER YOU READ:

1. According to the author, what benefits did he get from video games?
2. What significant transition does the author describe, and what role did video games play during that transition?
3. Read the article on p. 30 by Mathias Hamman. How does that Mathias's perspective contrast with Kyle's perspective?

---

*Kyle Dougherty is in the GED preparation class at Plainville Adult and Continuing Education in Plainville, CT. He has a 7-month old golden retriever named Bones, and he is the best.*