Mountains near Winter Park, Colorado, to the east side near the town of Rollinsville, Colorado. While perusing that page, he posted a sarcastic reply to a picture and comment extolling a great hiking trip someone had taken at Rollins Pass. Daugherty says he wrote, “It must be nice to be able to get out and actually enjoy life and do something.” That person responded by saying, “Trust me. It will get better.”

That person was Mike Shea, a snowboarder and Paralympic hopeful at that time (he’s since reached that goal, winning silver at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia); Shea has a left transtibial amputation. The two developed a friendship and Shea taught Daugherty how to snowboard—a sport he continues to pursue. Additionally, Daugherty has been taking classes toward earning an associate degree in marketing management, and has had several public speaking engagements during which he talked about his amputation and working through the despair he has felt periodically through his recovery.

Throughout all this, he has relied on his faith. He has the support of his wife, Melanie, and the encouragement of his children, Micah, Brenna, and Ashley. “I’m learning to count the blessings that I have,” he says.

He is regrouping by immersing himself in making videos and video editing for personal reasons—hoping to reach others who despair or have suffered limb loss and offer them inspiration—and for the church he attends. (The name of his YouTube channel is Popcorn Video Productions.)

Despite everything, or perhaps because of everything, Daugherty emphasizes that amputation was the right choice for him. He was always active as a child, despite his parents’ attempts to restrict his activities, yet as an adult, the deteriorating condition of his affected foot and ankle posed unwanted limitations. “I never knew the phrase ‘slow down,’” he says. “[B]eing the strong, persistent person I am…I tried to keep up with other kids.”

Today, Daugherty is much more active than he could have been prior to the amputation. “Snowboarding was never an option. Riding a bike wasn’t an option. Would I be able to build a chicken coop or work in the garden or work on my camper? That wouldn’t have been an option to do those things. Because toward the end, before my amputation, I was lying on the couch in a lot of pain,” he says. “Clearly I made the right choice.”

Laura Fonda Hochnadel can be reached at laura@opedge.com.