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The Influence of Role Models

“You never rise to the occasion, you default to your level of preparation” (Mike Swider). This was a quote from my football coach telling us whether it is a sports game or a test you have coming up, you never can just show up to adversity better without any practice, you perform as well as you prepared beforehand. Throughout my educational journey, I have had my ups and downs like most people, but I definitely have had more good experiences than bad. This positive experience couldn't have happened if it wasn't for my football coach, my Bible teacher, and my mother. These people are the biggest influences in my life and have helped advance me in my educational journey.

My football coach, Coach Swider, is one of if not the most influential person I have ever met. He was able to motivate and prepare us not just on the field, but off the field and how to make us better students and become men of God. Coach Swider was a walking quote book, everything that he said would hit anyone that was listening right into their heart. During practice, he would always get on guys if they dropped a pass or if a player blew their coverage and gave up a touchdown, but after getting on the player he would always say, “I'm getting on you not because I'm mad, but because I love you kid and I'm passionate about what I do.” Out of practice, I would always meet with him and just talk about not just football but my life and what is to come. I would talk about school hardships, how to become a better leader, how to become a

man of God, and he would always give me the best advice possible. I remember a specific day we were talking about faith and how I can start growing in my faith more and he stated, “Remember this, we only got two days guaranteed. Today and that day. If you want to truly become a man of God, start living today in light of that day” as he pointed up to the sky referencing Heaven above us. That message is something I will never forget and continue to carry with me for the rest of my life.



Another person who has impacted my educational journey was my senior year Bible teacher Mr. Fritz, and he was the first teacher I’ve had that actually felt like they understood me and wanted to help me succeed. I first met Mr. Fritz my freshman year of high school as I took a summer health class to get it out of the way during the actual school year. As I sat down in the class I remember listening to him throughout the course and hoping that somewhere down the road, I could have him as a teacher again. Luckily, I was able to have him for a Philosophy, Theology, and Worldview class in the second semester of my senior year. Throughout the class, we really looked at and dove into our current world and how much brokenness there is in it. How much our world needs Godly men and women to help bring people out of the patterns of the world and bring them to Jesus. We also talked about very personal issues that all of us face. The class really hit me deep on another level and that was because of Mr. Fritz. He helped us find the

solutions to our problems and point us towards the cross, each of us individually. He was one of the main contributors in my life that helped me come to my faith and bring me to the light of God and I can't thank him enough for helping me become saved by Christ.



The last person that has really helped me with my education journey is my mother. She has always been by my side supporting me and helping me learn everything I need to know. Her, being a teacher, meant that she knew how to critique my work with both the positives and negatives. The biggest thing she did though when she would critique me, was to always make me feel confident in the work I put in. Every time I wrote a paper or did a homework assignment and wanted her to review it, she would always give me her honest answer. She would tell me what she liked about it and what I can do to improve it, but she would never downput my work. Instead she would encourage me by saying, "You got this," or "It's almost there, just a few more changes." This made me feel confident in the work I put in and her words have also carried on to me now as I always feel confident in the effort I put into my work.



As I reflect on this paper, I really have realized how many positive role models I have in my life. I have so many people I can look up to and rely on to help me no matter what. These three people have really impacted my life and helped prepare me for my future. There are many other people that have impacted and helped me on my educational journey as well, but I feel like these three stand out from the rest.