

## S. Anthony

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Of all the people in my life, the one person that has inspired me the most is my mom. I think the reason I look up to her so much is because she grew up in a very unloving home, but raised my brother and I in the most loving environment I could have imagined. She never once heard her parents tell her they loved her, and she has told me she loves me almost every day for 19 1/2 years. Her parents didn't encourage or support her in trying new activities or learning new things; my mother let me try dancing, horseback riding, guitar, piano, and flute, among others. As a single parent, she cared enough to borrow money to get our family into a good neighborhood and into a school district with the best elementary, middle, and high schools in the state. My mom is the reason that I found music and decided to pursue it as a career, and the reason that I got into good schools that helped me have a shot at good scholarships so I could go to college. She inspires me because she demonstrates that your circumstances don't have to dictate the outcome of your life, but also that when things get rough you may have to sacrifice the things you love for the people you love.

Another way my mom inspires me is through the sheer number of things she has accomplished. If there is one thing I want for my life, it is to keep learning things and trying new experiences, and my mom has definitely done that. Not only does she have one bachelor's degree and two master's degrees, but she learned how to sail and scuba dive, she went backpacking in Europe for a month, ran marathons and triathlons, learned martial arts, is a retired Marine, and most importantly, a mother. The person she is today is a testament to the worth of varied life experiences, and a lesson I hope to be able to demonstrate to my kids someday. I remember asking her one time if she wished she had never met and married my dad, to which she replied, "If I had never met your dad, I never would have met you and your brother!" She has always put my brother and me before anything else, and her selflessness inspires me to help other people in any way I can. I have felt unconditionally loved my whole life, and if there's one thing my mom has taught me, it's that I want to spend my life trying to make other people feel the same way.