

L. McMahon

Of all the people in my life, the one person who inspired me most is...

If someone were to ask me what I remember most about my grandfather, I would immediately reply, "his laugh." Perhaps this is an odd way to remember one's elder, not by memories of fishing lessons or stories about the good old days, but I will never forget his silly guffaw accompanied by his characteristic goofy grin. He was a man who exuded nothing but happiness, affecting everyone around him. At far too young of an age, my grandfather was taken from the world he made so much brighter through his good humor, kindness, and attitude about everything. However, the lack of his presence does not mean that the earth must be devoid of all he represented.

When this amazing man passed away, I realized how quickly and unexpectedly life can come at anyone; eternity is not at my disposal, is not waiting for me to make something of my life. As I thought this, I remembered my grandfather and how he lived each day. I decided to undertake the lifestyle that he led so that his legacy of happiness and care could live on even though he could not. To him, each day was not simply a means to get to the next in the hope that something better may eventually arise. While the future is still important, I no longer overlook the path to it. I try to enjoy each day as its own entity as well as that which leads to the future, as there is no way to know when my days will end.

Another thing that inspired me was how my grandfather was always so incredibly, unstoppably happy. Seeing someone that excited about life and determined to spread joy to others made an immovable impact on me. I wanted to, like my grandfather, be a conduit of cheerfulness to others. Optimism became my foundation, and I now accept that whatever troubles I run into, I will make it out and become stronger as a result of them. With this foundation, I can spread the gloriously contagious condition of happiness. I always try to find ways to make others around me laugh and worry just that little bit less. Constantly surrounded by stressed-out, over-worked teenagers in high school, I like to help my friends enjoy life and remember that they can always get through their problems, whether big or small.

When I die, I do not want to simply be forgotten as another person selfishly concerned with where she alone was going in life. I would like to be remembered as someone who tried to make a difference, someone who tried to improve the world if even just a little bit. That small amount can mean the entire world to someone who needs it, and hopefully that person will be moved enough to make an impact on others as well, as was the case with my grandfather and me. As Tryon Edwards once said, "we rarely forget that which has made a deep impression on our minds."