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### My Idol

I have always looked up to people, especially after they share their life story. But there is one person who I have always admired no matter what, ever since I was little. That person is my mother, not only is she strong but also super selfless and puts others above herself. She is the type of person you can always count on no matter what, who will always have your back even when you're in the wrong. But she is so much more than that, she is funny, compassionate, loving, and extremely smart. However, that's not exactly why she inspires me every single day; the reason I aspire to be like her is because she grew up with nothing but challenges, but that didn't stop her from being successful in life. Even though I have known her all my life, I never heard about her childhood until one day which felt like yesterday.

As we were sitting in the living room, our conversation started to fade out what was playing on the TV, in that moment it was just me, her, and the past. My very first question to her was "how was your childhood?" That simple question let everything unfold. The very first thing she said was "horrible, I had no childhood;" hearing her cracked voice as she fought to hold her tears back, I started to get emotional. She had this look on her face, something I have never seen before. It was a mixture of sadness but also pure hatred. She then added how she became a step-in mother for her 5 siblings at 9. "I was the youngest and was supposed to enjoy

my childhood, but I was forced to grow up” she said. Which is crazy to think about because when I was 9 years old, I was still playing with dolls and playing dress-up.

The hardest question for my mom was about her father. I always wondered what their relationship was like because my mom hardly talked about him. “What about your dad, how was he like” I asked her. “My father was an alcoholic and gambler” she said. He could go on for days with no contact, much less be there for them. She described him as lazy, rude, and bipolar. There were times when he felt so guilty about being absent that he would buy them new things. But that did not change the fact that he still abandoned them. Her father being selfish caused an eternity of trauma for my mom, her siblings, and my grandma. As much as my mom is loving and forgiving, she could never get over the way her father treated them, even now that my grandpa passed away, she still has an immense hatred towards him.

Since my mom had to be a mom to her siblings, there was so much she had to leave, not just her childhood. Fortunately, she was able to finish elementary school but that was all she could get done. She ended up having to get jobs just to get by, and even then, it wasn't enough. One of the greatest wishes she had was being a teacher, it was all she ever wanted to do as she absolutely loved English class and reading. But with everything going on, she couldn't pursue her dream. But as much as she wanted to give up, she pushed through and became successful with what she could. Even though her success was not her becoming a doctor or a teacher, she still managed to provide for us anyway she could. As people think being successful is having a high paying job and affording luxuries; that was not my mother's case. Her success was having a good family and being fortunate enough to have a roof over her head.

In the end, my mother sharing about her life inspired me to not let obstacles determine my future and even my present. Instead, I should use them to strengthen myself and become more. As hard as life may seem, I have started seeing my problems in life as merely nothing. Because nothing that I go through will ever compare to the hardships my mother had to endure. That is why in the end; she is my idol.