

My fondest childhood memories consist of time spent with my dad watching movies, having pillow fights, and going on adventures. My character and values reflect those of my father. He is a special education teacher celebrated for using alternate ways of helping students succeed. His work shows me the beauty in thinking differently and empathizing with a wide array of people. I try to emulate these qualities in my daily life.

I constantly seek diverse relationships from which I can gain new perspectives. My curiosity naturally draws me to the stories of others, like the ribbons of a maypole stretching in all directions. I am a person eager to learn from people who think differently than me. At cross country, I have befriended a lot of different people with a variety of interests.

When running four miles every day after school with the same group of people, all there is to do is share. In my four years of cross-country I have made lasting friendships and developed an understanding for my teammates. Our conversations vary from the highs and lows of our days, to school assignments, and deeper problems like home stresses and insecurities. Cross-country is where I learned to listen and my curiosity to hear my teammates' stories is grounded in empathy.

These past two years, I developed an appreciation for the creativity of my peers. With the initial intention to learn to be a self-sufficient filmmaker, I joined Freestyle Academy, an interdisciplinary arts and digital communications program at my high school. I quickly learned that the only way to create a successful film is through engagement. My content is impacted by the choices of my collaborators. Learning from my peers makes my work stronger.

Being a part of a program like Freestyle, with the expectation that everyone shares a common motivation to produce quality work, I am surrounded by passionate and creative students. The projects we take on often carry many conflicts and setbacks, and I regularly find myself problem solving with my peers and offering solutions. For instance, I have learned to value our group brainstorming sessions, especially because such a collaborative environment fosters creative output.

My dad always tells me that I am a natural communicator who would be an amazing teacher, deeply invested in my students. I want to use the values I learned from him and apply them to my interest in joining the film community. The storyteller is only as successful as those who listen. With all of this in mind, my desire to produce makes perfect sense. I will tell stories, listen to my crew, and support the values of engagement, understanding, and collaboration.