

Who's your greatest influence?



Last month we asked you, our readers, to describe the most influential people in your lives. Your answers were thoughtful, touching and inspiring. We've reprinted the responses here and want to thank everyone for such warm and open answers!

My grandma was my "soft place to fall" while growing up in a chaotic, alcoholic home. Once a year we would visit her on the farm. It was a childhood escape. Her love was unconditional and abundantly healing.

I aim to keep positive people in my life and the person who has been in life since I was 15 is my best friend. She has a husband, two small kids, a dog, a full time job and she has inspired me to be the best me I can be and always encourages taking care of ourselves with our busy lives. For the things she knows she will not have the time to do, she outsources or delegates and therefore reduces her stresses allowing her to focus on the important people in her life although it's a busy one.

The chair of my dissertation committee has taught me the value of working hard and the power of an education.

My brother has shown me the path he took for his success.

A former supervisor. She lead by example and in the process taught me how to effectively communicate with others.

My cousin was a huge influence. He was a professional diesel mechanic who would rival our finest minds today. A true technician's technician who was light years ahead of his time.

My husband has been a great source of inspiration and encouragement to me in my life and especially in my career.

My parents were my biggest influencers. Their unconditional love and support fed my heart. The courage of my young inexperienced parents and their strength was the best example for living that anyone could have asked for. They were my heroes and continue to be. My father passed as a young man and my mother courageously fights her last battle...with Alzheimer's.

My aunts who are hardworking have inspired me to always go with it. Work hard and be honest with everyone. Do a good deed daily. Always help others cause one day you will need help too.



I had a 2nd grade teacher who saw potential in several of her students, including myself. She encouraged us to do extra, fun things to increase our learning, including putting on a play for our fellow students. I could tell she really loved her students. That class was one of my favorites.

The owner of the business where I had my first job. Taught me the importance of doing a job right the first time, taking ownership for my actions, honesty and to always do the best you can at everything you do.

A priest I worked for and whose parish I attended over 16 years ago. He was always sharing and mentoring me with love, logic and God's caring shoulder. This made a great influence in teaching me how I treat people today and every day.

My aunt who is now deceased taught me how to dress for a little bit but look like a million, to buy the right cut of meat and season it just right so that it would melt in your mouth but most of all she taught me to love myself and others would love me for who I was — not for who they wanted me to be. Thru the years I have raised a daughter with the same principles and she is an awesome young woman today.

My 16 year old son is one of my most influential people in my life. He teaches me new things every day and he helps to give me strength to accomplish what I need to in life for myself and for him. He makes me a better person.

My children have been influential in my life. If they can get up every morning and smile at the world, so can I.

My two daughters, who always keep me on the right track: fitness, nutrition, moral values, social justice, respect to all, and real meaning of LOVE!

My band directors, the majority of whom were men, which is important when your father is absent. Showing up all day, every day for hundreds of kids and giving 100% makes these teachers very special.

A former pastor, who to this day is more like a father to me. He is a very enlightened man, well read, humble, humorous, non-judgmental, compassionate, empathetic, realistic, etc. I could go on and on. My life would not be the same without his influence.

Thank you for all your responses. We look forward to hearing from you in our next survey!