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Developmental Autobiography

My life has been influenced by many variables, all of which molding me into the person that I am today. The most important of these influences has been my family and my setting; these three factors have probably had the greatest impact on my life and personality. Each has contributed differently to my development of self and has had a special effect on the person I have become. To best understand how the factors of my life have contributed to my personality, it would be helpful to best understand my living environments, including my settings and of course my family.

The greatest link that one may find to me and the views I have could probably be found within my family and the experiences they have given me growing up. Specifically, my parents are responsible for influencing many of my traits and unusual quirks. The best way to demonstrate my family's influence on me is by discussing each of my parent's individually, followed later in the paper by an explanation of how they have influenced my personal traits.

My father is from Maysville, Kentucky, a small Kentucky farming community, and grew up on the farm as a very hard worker. He joined the army as was stationed in Germany during the 70s, then stationed in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He has held several positions since I was born, including an army officer, manager of an impound car lot for drug confiscations, a farmer, and an alternative education teacher and principal. My father has taught high school and middle school football, and during my senior year, was my high school soccer coach. He currently is holding a health and physical education teaching position at the middle school.

My mother, on the other hand, was born in Singapore, when it was colonized by the British. After have lived there for her younger years, she then went to boarding school in London, England. She was an art student at university and then became a teacher. She was stationed with the British army in Germany, the same time as my father, and met him there. My mother stayed at home when my brother and I were born, and didn't get another job until we had both started school. She became a special education teacher and is now recognized for her contributions to assistive technology, inclusion, and alternate portfolios, not only in Kentucky, and but also on the national level.

I also have a brother who is three years younger than me. He has always been very similar in personality to me and we both enjoy many of the same interests. We fought a lot in our younger years, and then were not as much a part of each others lives while he was in middle school. The time when my brother and I really bonded is when I was a senior in high school; he also happened to be a freshman. I think that our friendship then came to new levels, and we were not only brothers, but best friends. Now that I am away at school, we have less contact, but we are both very much a part of the other's life.

In addition to my family, my setting has greatly impacted my personality. I was born on an army base in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I don't remember much of my life there, just several specific things about the setting, but not much of my life growing up there. After these years, my father accepted a position in Arizona running a drug confiscated car lot. This was a change in landscape; now instead of living on the plains, I was living the mountainous desert on the border of Mexico. The place I lived was Rio Rico, Arizona. This is a small town right outside of Nogales which is on the US and Mexican border; the border actually divides the same city into two parts.

For holidays and summer trips I would travel with my family to England and Kentucky. In England I would tour castles and other historical landmarks, as well as spend time in London. While in Kentucky, family time was all the time; we would always stay with my grandmother, and the family would always be over at her house due to the fact that everyone lived in Maysville. On occasion, we would also take trips to the landmarks around Arizona and Mexico, including the many Native American historical villages, abandoned mines, volcano craters, the Grand Canyon, and the Desert Museum.

When I was nine years old, my father moved to Kentucky to take a new job. My mother stayed in Arizona with my brother and me to sell the house. This happened near the end of my fourth grade school year. I hadn't even finished that school year when my family moved to Kentucky. My father rented a semi truck and we packed all our furniture up and left on a three day trip across country. I have lived in Kentucky since I was in the fifth grade. Maysville is a small town where everyone knows everyone. My family is very prominent in Maysville, and that does not make the situation any easier. If I had done something wrong, my whole family had heard about it before school was even over. There is also not that much to do in Maysville; there is a YMCA, a Boy's Club, and a movie theater; that is about it. The closest mall or large entertainment center is about an hour and a half drive away. Maysville is a small farming community with not much diversity either, at times a bit close-minded. But along with being small, I feel like I was catered to in ways that people from a large city aren't; I was able to get attention and there was not as much stuff to get me in trouble. That is where I have spent the past eight years of my life. I still go home for holidays and some weekends, but I am now settled into an apartment in Morehead.

It is also worth mentioning a very important trip I went on before my senior trip of high school called the United Nations Youth Pilgrimage. This is a two and a half week trip across the region that travels to Gettysburg, Philadelphia, Washington D. C., Niagara Falls, and New York City. During the tour, the group visited different historical sites and while in New York, the group met with students all over the world and spent time in the actual United Nations Center learning about worldly issues. I was one of two students from Kentucky placed on a bus with students from around our regional states.

Another setting that I would like to include is a small town in northern Indiana called Porter. This is where my girlfriend is from. It is a beautiful place on the beach of Lake Michigan. I have spent a great deal of time there with her family and friends. It is a small town like Maysville, but the surrounding areas have a lot more opportunities for recreation and education. Porter is only an hour drive or train ride from Chicago. I have spent some time there as well, with my girlfriend's family as well as just with her.

These environments have all had their little part in developing me as a person. Each has influenced my personality and taught me more about life. Along with my

family, my environment has helped me become a liberal thinker. They have also taught me a great love of learning and care for humanity. To me, these three traits are all really strands of the same idea.

I like to think of myself as liberal thinker and not as a judgmental person. My open-mindedness is one quality I cherish about my personality. I have a broad range of interests from music to sports to growing bonsai trees. I think that my outlook on life is open to all the diversities because that is what I grew up with; diversity. My parents practically had two different dialects, and I even used to have a beautiful British accent. At the same time I was visiting castles and learning about the royal family of Britain, I was studying Native American art and culture! On the frequent trips to Kentucky, I was riding horses, learning about milking cows, and learning how to grow tobacco. In my elementary years I grew up with students that primarily spoke Spanish and was even learning the language myself. To add to the number of languages I was experiencing my mother beginning learning sign language to aid some of her students.

Besides all the differences of languages, I was experiencing different personality types. My mother was teaching special needs students and I was always helping her with her classroom things. I was also going to school with Mexican, American, African American, and Native American students. Diversity was all around me and has been throughout my life. There has never been any norm that I have noticed, especially in my younger years.

Due to my experiences learning about so many different cultures and lifestyles, I have always realized an endless body of knowledge to challenge me. I have always strived to learn more. I grew up interested in life and learning, that is what I had experienced. My father and mother were always reading to me, and pushed me to read for myself. Mother showed me an enjoyment of the arts and historical cultures. Father showed me an appreciation of family and importance of the land. There was always something new brought to my attention and something new to learn about.

I think most of this comes from my parents. He was always very strict with me, because that is the way he was brought up. As a child I wasn't supposed to question, just do as I was told. I had a hard time with this, because I didn't understand his reactions for some things. Again, this regiment of living is very strict and based on rules. This type of living was instilled in me. My parents were very different people and they passed that down to me. I was already growing up in a diverse environment because my parents had two different dialects! Also the teaching setting that my parents had gave me a broader understanding of home life for other people. My mother taught me the appreciation of everyone, even the disabled.

Another reason for this liberal way of thinking could be my settings, or environments that I have lived in. I was born at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and lived on the army base for several years. At the same time, I would spend some Christmas and summer vacations in England with my mother's side of the family; we would tour castles, visit Stonehenge, shop downtown London, and experience small village life in England. My grandmother has her milk delivered by the milkman, picks her own strawberries, and gets her bread from the bakery in town. When we went to visit my father's family, I would go ride horses, see the county, and visit the family dairy farm. When I was seven my family moved to Nogales, Arizona; Nogales is right on the border of Mexico. I have learned to appreciate new cultures and diversity because I was involved in so many of

them. Several of my friends were Mexican, my cousin from England and I wrote letters all the time, and I studied the history of Native Americans and castles all at the same time. How can a child live like that and not appreciate diversity?

Another quality I think I have is an endless drive and love of learning. My parents' involvement in education has helped push me in that direction, but there are several other factors. Already being exposed to a lot of culture gave me a desire to learn more. My parents always pushed me to do well in school, and always provided me with good opportunities; I had excellent teachers, I was read to a lot when I was younger; I was pushed to be involved in learning.