

Where I'm From Essay

Iain Mackinder

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“Why is she here at school with us? She can’t even read!” These are words that my mother had to hear nearly daily throughout her schooling. These words have rung in her head ever since and affect who she is as a person today. My mom accepted from a young age that she was never going to be like everyone else after learning of her dyslexia. Even though she was still young, her future was already in question as this was bound to have an impact on her performance in school. My grandparents put her in ice hockey and instantly loved it. She turned out to be exceptionally talented and was getting scholarship offers from multiple universities at the age of 16. She had to be careful with her decision though, realistically, this was the furthest she was ever going to be able to go with hockey, and it was never going to provide a living for a future family. She followed her heart and made the decision that would make her the happiest. Through all the ridicule and insults growing up, she persisted and committed to Niagara university on a hockey scholarship.

Alongside her dyslexia, my mom had always had social anxiety due to how she was treated by classmates and even her own parents as a child, and she continued to struggle with it in university. Going in to her first practice with the team, she was “mortified by what other people were going to think of her”. She didn’t really feel like she fit in with the rest of her teammates and early on she was questioning her decision. But she had no other option, she had to keep going. Other than this, her time at school was taking a turn for the better, she took up an interest in religious studies and ancient history. At this time, she also met her future husband and my father. Ironically, he was the athletic trainer for her hockey team. Things were going well but just like Newton’s third law states every action requires an equal or opposite reaction, and she was about to find out what this reaction was.

One of the worst words an athlete can hear is injury, and she heard it a lot throughout university. In a horrific accident, my mom tore all the major ligaments in her right knee. It was the “worst possible feeling, like someone was repeatedly punching my knee as hard as they could all day”. She got surgery, but recovery was going to be a long road, and she was told that it was injured so badly she may never be able to play hockey again. Recovering on campus was less than ideal as well and she had no one close to her to help her other than her boyfriend at the

time. She saw this as an opportunity to catch up on school and spend more time with her boyfriend. About six months after her surgery, she was able to walk and put weight on her leg. This gave my mom hope. Despite all of uncertainty and pain, she was determined to get back into hockey and succeed. Never mind the past, she was destined to “gain control of my own life back”. My mom was indeed able to come back and play hockey, better than she had ever had before. Her team made the final four of the NCAA national tournament, which she calls her proudest achievement. She had little time to celebrate though as she had to go back to school the next day.

Graduation was right around the corner, and she was busy as ever struggling through studying for final exams. Reading and writing was still difficult due to her dyslexia but if she got good grades on her finals, she was setting herself up well for her future. Fortunately, this was the case and she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in religious studies. The sky was the limit for her, she had already persevered through so much and she felt like “nothing could stop her momentum”. But something could, and it was me.

My mom was pregnant, only months after she had graduated. Neither my mom or dad had a job, so how they were going to support me was a mystery. Finding a job was harder than she thought it was, upon employers learning of her dyslexia, most rejected her. After she was accepted to a few low-income jobs she realized she was going to have at least 2 jobs. She says it was “the hardest time of my life, I was working two sometimes three jobs just to make sure you were going to be fed and happy”. Thankfully, everything in the end worked out and a few years later we were able to move into a house, the same one we live in to this day.

Throughout her whole life, my mom has been a victim of constant adversity. The beginning of her hockey journey may have simply started with her parents trying to keep her active, but it took her to so many life changing places. If it weren’t for her decision to commit to university and meet my father, I would not be here today. My mom inspires me, she teaches me persistence, loyalty, and most importantly. I can’t imagine growing up without her being here. My mom has always told me that sometimes life will kick you when you’re down but it’s how you deal with the difficult situations that determine what kind of person you’re bound to become.

