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Essay Topic A - (Describe a significant setback, challenge or opportunity in your life and the impact that it has had on you.)

Del Valle High School

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To say I find myself reminiscing on my past is quite ironic considering that there is nothing positive worth reminiscing over. It's just that I can't remember any good times. So I try not to remember anything at all. There is no denying the absence of such crucial figures in my life such as my immediate family. I have been raised with no mother, no father, and two brothers who have spent most of their lives in prison. Since my mother's death I have seen nothing more than the two of them take turns slowly throwing their lives away with some of the most self destructing decisions I have ever witnessed. To this day, they both regret the past.

Sadly, though, I indeed have watched and remember every decision they made. There is nothing forgettable about watching my mother being beaten by my father. There's nothing worth remembering at a funeral flooded by grief. You think I would be tired of crying by now, but still, thinking about my mother's funeral seems to be the only trigger of my tears. The mere thought of it always seems to come weighted with my father's disappearance and my brothers' self destruction. But it is these very same weights that I have used to make me a physically, mentally, and emotionally stronger person.

Watching my brothers make the wrong decisions remains the most important factor in me becoming the person I am today. Their choices are what distinguished to me

the possibilities that negative choices destroy and positive decisions create. This has already taken me miles in the pursuit of my education because it has taught me discipline, integrity, and respect for myself and others. My brothers have shown me that if I want to achieve the things I feel I deserve in life, then only I can make myself fail or succeed. Distractions are only momentary test along the way to be passed or failed.

Watching them fail has set my determination into overdrive, because I have to pass. Losing my mother will not be my reason for failing. Not having my father will not be my reason for failing. Not even watching my brothers throw their lives away and leave me alone to be raised by my single aunt will make me fail. To be honest, they are all reasons that drive me to succeed, and in today's society, true success comes with a college degree.

Even in elementary school my aunt made it clear to me that I would need a college degree if I wanted to pursue my dreams. In return, I made it known to her that for as long as I could remember I wanted to get my Masters in Business Administration at a top tier university. To which she painfully reminded me that we wouldn't be able to afford it. That never even slowed me down. I would just have to do the work, make the grades, and find a way to get what I wanted, and I have. I have participated in three varsity sports including basketball, football, and track. I am a member of the Del Valle Chapter of the National Honor Society. And all the while, I have maintained a high grade point average with a difficult course load consisting of Advanced Placement and Dual Credit classes at ACC. I have set myself up to attend either the University of Texas or Texas A&M University, or maybe even Harvard and I hope to eventually graduate with my Masters in Business Administration. Nothing about such goals that I have set for

myself seems easy, but then again, nothing about my life has ever been anywhere close to easy. There has never been a silver spoon placed in my mouth with a chance for success leaking over the edge. So I view college as a chance for me to mold that silver spoon myself.

Amazingly though, I will not feed myself with said spoon, but instead use it as a model for my future children of what they too will be able to achieve no matter the circumstances. There is no reason for my youth to have to suffer the way I did. I plan to use my education from kindergarten to graduate school to create a life for my children that they will be comfortable living and understand the importance of hard work. Nothing was ever handed to me, but I want to see to it that my college education will inspire my children to do even better than me, when they plan to provide for their children the way I plan to provide for them.