

Question of the Month



During October, the Senior Group reflected on the question: who are/were some of the wise persons in your life? How do they influence you?

My wife is very wise and I truly cherish her. She has cared for me through two heart operations, and now through my eye and hearing problems, she is constantly medicating me.

I have been fortunate to have had a few wise persons in my life. My maternal grandmother, my father, and the mother of a friend! Each of these persons contributed a distinct wisdom – the first a woman's strength, the second a man's perspective, and the third, a convert's view. I find myself missing them often yet their sage words comfort me.

The wise persons in my life were my parents. They were the most influential. My mother was the most loving, generous, and understanding person I've ever known. She was always willing to help anyone who was in need. She instilled in me and my siblings all that she stood for. Even today my friends tell me how much they loved my Mom. Both of my parents wanted us to be educated, but also to be courteous, kind, and respectful towards others. I tried to instill the same values in my children.

In looking back into my very first experience outside the confines of home – I must admit the dedicated nuns of parochial education would be my first choice. They molded my thoughts and actions in the most positive direction for my future years. Their rigid methods may be criticized by some, and I understand that...but for me, I'm happy my parents chose this direction. Wise parents – wise nuns, what a combination!

My late husband because, through his example, he taught me how to have a closer relationship with God.

My mom because she raised me by herself and I think that she did a pretty good job!

My mom and my husband were my best friends and greatest influence while they were alive. Evelyn Cahill, an 85 year old retired nurse, hospice volunteer and grief counselor was a big influence in my life after losing both my mom and my husband just 4 months apart in 2003. Evie supported me with weekly phone calls and visits. She was always there when I needed her. She taught me that when you give so much of yourself to others, the rewards are far more than what you give. Evie made me realize that it was my choice to either be sad and lonely or to go on living by helping others. I know this is what my husband would have wanted me to do. Evie passed away 2 years ago at the age of 96. She was a role model for many women as a wife, mother, nurse and volunteer. She remains in my heart forever.

(OVER)

My Father – taught me to “turn the other cheek”

A former Pastor – taught me to “bloom where I am planted.”

A Nun – she is always calm and serene – shares her faith and inspires me to follow Jesus

A Friend who keeps me on my toes – always encouraging me to look inside of Myself.

Without a doubt, my parents have been a powerful influence in my life. A strong, undemonstrative but supportive mother and an adorable, hardworking, good-natured father, they played a huge role in shaping who I am. However, as important as my parents were, there was something else that played an important part in informing the way I see, feel, and behave. It's books. At an early age, my mother taught me to read from the nursery rhymes imprinted on the linoleum in my bedroom. Once I started reading, I couldn't stop, preferring Grimm's and Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tales to toys at Christmas.

As a child, it was through books that I became aware of such qualities as humility, nobleness, courage from the characters and historical figures I read about in the novels and biographies written for the young. I still remember Josie, a character from one of my favorite books, being told by a friend that she wanted to be known and remembered for great deeds. Josie replied that she would also like to do noble and wonderful things, but she didn't want anyone but herself to know about them. That was my introduction to what humility was, a trait I find myself still wrestling to achieve.

Books also presented me with models to emulate, real live people who showed courage and humanity through adversity, people like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and Ulysses S. Grant, who is now being recognized by historians for the admiral feats of courage and humanity he displayed as a general and president.

However, I would not have been receptive to these characters and historical figures if it were not for my parents, whose formal education ended with the eighth grade. What these characters and people did for me was to give words to the concepts I intuited from my parents, in the end making me who I am. My parents laid the foundation – books did the rest.

