

When you are young there are two people who are supposed to love and care for you from the moment you are born, those people are your father and mother. Your parents are the most influential people in your life; your very person is a reflection of your parents' hard work and love. I have had one true father-figure, but only for a short amount time.

My mother left my father when I was a year old. He was a drug addict and threatened her too many times, so she left Prince of Wales and moved to Ketchikan. I had a few good memories of my father when I was younger, because I had no clue what a drug addict looked like. As I got older, I started to realize that something was off with my father and every interaction became creepier.

When I was twelve my father came over to my house with a plastic cast on his arm. He told my mother and I that he fell off a ladder when taking down Christmas lights at work. After he proceeded to knock on his cast with his free hand and say, "Look at this! Isn't it cool!?" My mother rolled her eyes and said, "Yeah, Lily had one of those when she broke her wrist." My father then said, "Oh right! When she fell down the stairs." I have never fallen down the stairs; I broke my wrist when I stepped off the edge of my mother's flower truck. My father was adamant, even after my mother's protests. At that very moment, I realized what drugs can do to a person's brain and that my father's brain was gravely affected by it.

Since that moment all the interactions became scary. My father would come up to me anytime he saw me, and at any time he could be drunk and/or high. I got to the point where even if I saw someone who looked like him, I would duck and hide, or even just turn the other way and go someplace else.

It has been a struggle growing up without a father-figure in my life. I did at one point have a man I called my dad. When I was three, my mom was with a man that was my father figure. We played baseball in the yard, I sat on his shoulders to watch the Fourth of July parade, and we did many other father/daughter things. But as I got older, he started to become angry over small things like when I asked for help on homework. He never believed parents were supposed to help their kids with things like that. He also eventually ignored me altogether and only talked to me when he need to ask an important question such as, when I was traveling for

school, or when I asked him a direct question. The summer of my eighth grade year he left my family without any warning. Since then my uncle has been my father-figure in my life.

Both my father and the man I called my dad are the type of people who I want to try hard not to be. My father was once a very intelligent man, but now he struggles with day to day tasks, and my dad was once a very loving man, but quit on his family. I try my hardest to think of the good qualities they both once had, but all that I think of is the horrible memories I have of them. I would never want to ruin my own life or put my friends and family in the scary position I experienced. Every day I push myself to work hard and achieve my goals, because I am better than them. I strive my hardest to not be what either of them have become, and I am determined to become what he could have been: smart, successful, and respected.

Over my time in high school I have maintained a 3.88 GPA while participating in numerous activities. This fall I plan on attending the University of Montana to study Forensic Chemistry and Forensic Sciences. If I keep going on the path I'm traveling now, I know I will never end up like my father. And if my father had his head on right, or my dad actually talked to me, I know they would be proud of the things I have accomplished and will accomplish in the future.