

Student: Samantha Adams
Employee: John Landon
College: Ozarks Technical Community College

Essay Title: *Inspiration: The compass for the Lost*

Essay: What does it truly mean to inspire someone? Does it mean building someone up or holding someone's hand while they progress? For me it meant igniting a fire of inspiration in someone. That someone being me.

When I started at Ozark's Technical Community College I was adrift in life. I felt like a fawn that had wandered into the city; unsure and lost. I started small with only one class. I wasn't sure if criminal justice was really for me so I had many doubts and worries. Since I'm a woman I thought I might be too fragile or too small to be an officer and that no one would take me seriously. I remember walking into class unprepared and scared of what to expect; but I was greeted with a welcoming smile and a fist bump (courtesy of my teacher).

I was very lucky to have randomly chosen Mr. Landon's class. He had been an officer for almost 26 years and a teacher for even longer. When he spoke he had such power and meaning behind his words. When he talked about law enforcement it demanded respect from years of experience and wisdom. Much like an oak tree demands respect from the wind because its roots have made it strong.

I especially loved when he talked about how powerful women can be in law enforcement. When asked his personal thoughts on female officers, he simply said "I think it's fantastic". This copious amount of support ignited the fire of motivation and inspired me. When he talked about the real life ups and downs of an officer, it made it indisputable that this is what I wanted to do. I wanted to be an officer. The more I learned in class the more it was confirmed in my mind that I was making the right decision.

He was even willing to sit down and discuss different career options for officers, giving me a compass of inspiration to follow. I felt that he genuinely cared about his students and wanted us all to succeed. One of the most memorable class periods I had was when Mr. Landon told us the distinction between a leader and a boss. A boss simply gives orders to people beneath them. Leaders however want people to grow and thrive with knowledge. Mr. Landon was an obvious leader and urged us all to be leaders. These lectures made you feel so motivated that you swore you could lift a car or at least the textbook in front of you.

If it wasn't for Mr. Landon I would still be wandering through life not sure what path to take; too busy doubting my abilities and seeing my gender as a roadblock from opportunity. I can now say with confidence that my gender makes no difference in my career choice. I am going to be a police officer. A female police officer at that. Thanks to one teacher who thought it was fantastic.