

My dad has never been the easiest man to impress but my brother Nick could always do it. When Nick would play the drums, my father's eyes would sparkle and light up like fireworks on the fourth of July. I always wished my father would look at me like that but it was only my brother who could generate that look of pride. My father is an amazing drummer, so watching his only son take after him must have been great. My brother and my dad are the two people I adore and respect the most in this world and all I wanted to do was be like them and make them proud.

After my brother died, I never saw that look of pure joy in my father's eyes. I would try so hard to impress him. I played the violin, cello, piano, and even the flute hoping to please him but it was all in vain. I never saw even a glimmer of pride in his eyes. I would often ask, "Daddy are you proud of me?" and he would sigh and say of course he was, but his tone sounded like that of a tired old man whose daughter was exhausting him. I just wished my brother were there to teach me how to play as he did.

My freshman year in high school I joined marching band. Since I didn't play an instrument, I joined the color guard. My parents would come to games to watch me but my father would never glance at me once. He would always be completely focused on the drumline with this look in his eyes. This look like he had been cheated; he should have a son out there. A son who would stand out there in line with his head held high, looking like some god as he played, stick moving in perfect unison with the rest of the line. But all he had was a little girl tossing a flag.

When I saw my father look like that, it really hurt me. I wanted to be Nick for him, but I didn't think I was capable. Then my good friend Michelle who was in drumline convinced me to try out for it although I had never even picked up a stick. I finally agreed and started going to practice with her, and I don't think I have ever been more intimidated in my life. I remember walking into the room where the drums were kept. The room had a curious smell that I couldn't quite place. It was sort of like stale cotton candy and shoe polish. I would stand in there and watch Brad, Tony, and Liz in absolute wonderment as they played (something I still do to this day). They played like my brother used to, and that all I wanted to do.

So I worked really hard for the next few months, I ended up playing the bass drum, and my father was at the game to watch me play. I do not think I will ever forget the moment I saw his face. It was about halfway through Beethoven's 9th symphony; right at the part where the band breaks in to Ode to Joy. I was almost like a movie, it seemed like it was in slow motion as I looked up into the stands and saw my father's face with that same look of sheer pride he used to give my brother. I don't think all the happy, joyous words in the English language could describe just how wonderful I felt.

I thought I was going to start crying right there on the football field I was so happy. My father was proud of me. I felt like that in some way I had brought a little piece of my brother back to him. By being in drumline I am doing something, my brother would have done, and that makes me happier than anyone will ever know. I wish he was here to see me play, I think he'd enjoy it. And although I will never be as good as Nick was, I'm going to keep working at it. I want to see how many looks of pride I can get out of my father. And who knows, maybe I'm getting one out of Nick too.