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Competition surrounded my life as a child. Whether it was watching football, volleyball, and basketball with my father, or watching my sister and cousin play, or participating in activities myself. I think the people who influenced sports in my life the most are my cousin and sister. They strived to do their best in every activity they participated in. They helped prepare me for my own journey in the sports world.

My cousin Melanie is nine years older than me. She attended Meridian High School, she was a three sport athlete all four years and went on to play volleyball for York College for four years. She was a very successful student athlete in high school and in college. Something that stood out to me the most about my cousin's journey was how well her sports programs were. They were blessed with the greatest support system, coaches, and opportunities. Every time I attended her games the stands were just packed, the whole community would come to watch their games. She had the same basketball and volleyball coaches her whole high school career, I believe this played a huge role in how well they performed. My cousin was the setter for both her high school and college teams. After watching Melanie's games I knew I wanted to follow in her footsteps and be just like her. I couldn't wait to experience all the things she did.

A few years later I soon realized that unfortunately that wasn't going to be the case. My sister Cortney soon started her own journey. She attended Wilber Clatonia High School, the school I would attend six years after her. My sister was a three sport athlete all four years. The

sport that stuck out to me most was her basketball career. Courtney experienced a lot of losses throughout her career, ending with a career total of 16 wins. The community and school didn't show much support to the girls athletics. I can remember attending my sister's games and there only being around 15-20 people in the stands. It was a very different atmosphere than my cousins' games or even the boys' games. My sister went through two different coaches in the four years she played.

My cousin and sisters' experiences were very eye opening to me. My cousin showed me how far confidence and leadership would go. Melanie's leadership always stood out on the court, and she never showed any weaknesses. On the other hand, my sister showed me grit and patience. Courtney never complained and she always enjoyed what she was doing despite the wins or losses. But my sister really showed me that it wasn't going to be as easy and as successful as I thought it would be.

It was finally time for me to start my own journey. I started playing both volleyball and basketball around the age of ten. I quickly followed in my cousin's footsteps and became a setter for my volleyball team. But I soon endured the same experiences my sister did. We started losing, and honestly rarely did we have any wins, even when I was ten. I had prepared myself, and I was ready to face anything. I worked hard all four years in hopes to rebuild our program. I would work outside of practice all the time, whether it be in the gym by myself, or with my dad at home. Unfortunately our program still wasn't at the level I dreamed it would be. I went through three different basketball coaches in my highschool career and ended with a career total of 13 wins, three less than my sister. But I needed to remember what my sister had taught and showed me. Although losing does suck, I had to look at the brighter side and make sure to have

fun. I was also fortunate enough to have my family by my side throughout it all, they were proud of me no matter the outcome.

Going back and reminiscing all of my memories growing up showed me how much failure has had an effect on my life and how it has made me a stronger individual today. Failure has taught me how to cope with loss and adversity. Failure has made me push to be better every single day, not only in sports but in the workforce, classroom, and just everyday life in general. Failure gained me wonderful friendships, our losses only made us stronger together. Everyone goes through failure, not just me. It's important to not let that affect you and hold you back from trying to accomplish your goals.

