

Who or what inspires you? Why and how?

My inspiration comes from my parents. While some might consider that “on the nose,” the love, nurturance, perseverance, and sacrifice they’ve shown have profoundly shaped me into the individual I am today.

Both of my parents were full-time educators with over 40 years of combined experience in the public school system. From the start, learning was encouraged, and I was taught that access to education is a privilege – a truth often **unfathomable** to many, but one that deeply resonates with me as a young Black man in America.

My mother was born in Haiti and moved to the U.S. at age six. She didn’t understand any English and was often bullied in school. Yet she refused to let that **lacuna** in language intimidate her. She **sedulously** adapted, learned English, graduated high school, earned her B.S. in Education, and began teaching Haitian elementary students with language barriers; it was a full-circle moment she deeply cherished.

My father was the first in his family to graduate college, earning a B.S. in Sports & Business Administration at FAMU while playing the French horn in the iconic Marching 100. Though his educational journey was a milestone achievement, I’m inspired most by his fight against Stage IV colon cancer. Unfortunately, his battle concluded in 2017, but he was never defeated. He remained **intrepid** amidst the chaos that surrounded our family.

During that time, my mother retired to become his caretaker. I witnessed her strength and **deference** to my father’s dignity as he fought for his life. We uprooted from South Florida to Georgia so that my dad could receive specialized chemotherapy. I switched schools mid-junior year and took on more responsibility for my three younger siblings who were only 4, 5, and 6. Throughout this grueling process, I felt emotionally **enervated**, searching desperately for balance, but I refused to let those feelings break me. Instead, I leaned into my parents’ power, allowing their legacy to **bolster** me through it all. I’ll never forget my father’s final words: “*No matter what happens, you keep on going. You hear me?*” He smiled **jocosely**, but I knew how serious he was.

Currently, as I pursue my college education and navigate life’s vicissitudes, I carry their sacrifices with pride. My mother continues to be my greatest supporter. She, my siblings, and the memory of my father galvanize me forward.

So, am I inspired by my parents? Yes; I am.