If I had to choose one word to represent Everette Taylor, it would be determination. If I had to choose a single characteristic that separates Everette Taylor from other technologists, I’d choose determination. From birth, Everette has embraced struggle. He was born to a single parent family. He was raised by his mother, Millicent, and never knew his father. He grew up in housing projects in Richmond Virginia. Everette never thought that he was poor or considered himself disadvantaged until he began working in a museum. Growing up, drug dealing was the norm, gunshots were the norm.

During the beginning of his high school career, he started going to the library. He was fascinated with the computers but didn’t have a computer of his own. When he started working at the museum, he got to interact with privileged families, primarily white. While working at the museum, he realized that there were people out there that was a “whole nother world out there” – people spending money on fancy cars and frivolously spending their money. He began to research that culture at the library to understand their point of view.

For personal reasons, Everette lost his home with his mother, and was out on his own. He lived out of his car (which didn’t work) for his senior year of high school. He talked about how he sometimes went days, if not weeks without showering, and wearing the same clothes every day. This is where his entrepreneurial determination manifested. He began shoveling snow, then wiping windshields at local gas stations, then raking leaves, or doing whatever odd job he could find so that he could spend a night at a motel.

Everette is and always was a people person. Towards the end of his senior year, he landed a minimum wage hourly marketing position at United Way. While working at United Way, he started up a marketing consulting company that focused on connecting 18-20 year olds to events at primarily 21 and older venues. His marketing company was then acquired, and from there he began to climb the ranks.

Everette worked perpetually. He never stopped. He doubted himself constantly, but never held back from putting himself out there. He had a passion for understanding peoples’ viewpoints and creating marketing schemes that would perfectly relate to his target demographic using what he loved - technology. He loved to do what he did. That is what enabled his success. He loved his work. I’d say that that is biggest similarity between myself and Everette. I love to program. I program all day, and then program some more when I get home for fun.

Growing up, however, there are several major differences between Everette and myself. I had a very privileged upbringing. I grew up with an intact nuclear family. I didn’t have to work at 14 to pay bills to make ends meet, and I had access to technology. My dad, a Computer Science professor, ensured that I had access to technology. Everette talked about how difficult it was to talk about technology with his peers, because they had no interest in it. Everette explained, “you’ve got to understand, when we started becoming teenagers, my friends started becoming drug dealers. My friends were caught up in other things that were street related They didn’t really worry about tech or anything like that.” I, to this day, talk to my dad about programming, technology, and anything in between regularly. My inner circle of friends are all developers, I had a very nurturing life to technology. Everette, on the other hand, had many environmental barriers to entering the tech world.