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*Please note: To save paper, I have altered
this essay's line spacing and margins. Also, I
numbered paragraphs to facilitate class
discussion.*

--PClauss

A Man to Admire

(1) My dad yelled out from above, and I quickly spun around to see the ladder bang against the ground. The ladder bounced once before the aluminum frame settled. It was promptly followed by the growling chainsaw, which was silenced upon impact. I looked up, knowing my face mirrored my mom's and sister's terror filled expressions, expecting to see my dad following the chainsaw. I was half relieved and half stunned to see that he was 30 feet above the ground, his arms and legs wrapped tightly around the pine tree he had been cutting into mere seconds ago. At that moment my dad called out again, spurring me into action and out of my state of shock. I began dragging the foot of the ladder to the base of the tree. My mom quickly realized what I was trying to do and ran to the other end of the ladder to help me raise it back up. My dad immediately stepped onto the nearest rung and climbed down. Shaking, I ran up to him, frantically asking him if he was alright. The next thing I knew we were wrapped in a tight family hug. This was the moment that I realized how much my dad meant to me, and what an important figure he was for me. Even at the young age of nine, I saw my dad as my foremost role model, and I aspired to become a great man and father like him, as I do to this day.

(2) One of the things that makes me admire my dad so much is his generosity. A situation that I still remember that clearly demonstrates this was from a couple years back. My maternal grandmother had suddenly collapsed in her home in Mexico. She was immediately taken to the emergency room. It turned out that she had a life threatening blood clot in her head and had to have an expensive surgery done. When our family heard about it, my dad immediately wired out the money necessary, a total of twenty-thousand dollars, for the surgery. What makes this impressive to me is my dad's immediate and overly generous response; my mom has four brothers and two sisters here in the US who are just as well off as we are. However, they were all debating and each one wanted to contribute as little as possible. My dad understood the urgency of the situation, and although he had to dip into his retirement fund, he sent the money to his mother-in-law without hesitation. I remember asking him why he would do this, knowing that the weight of the payment should have corresponded to my aunts and uncles on my mom's side. He put it simply like this: "If there is someone in need, especially a loved one, and I know there is something I can do about it, why hesitate? It's the right thing to do. You will never achieve success for yourself if you do not

wish it for others.” I nodded, and I understood. My dad had showed me what the true meaning of generosity was through this selfless action.

(3) Not only has my dad shown me how important being generous is, he has also proved to me that any job can be done if I have perseverance and creativity. A prime example of this was from this past summer when I was doing the oil change on my truck. Once having drained the tank of the old oil, I proceeded to replace the oil filter. I put the wrench on the filter and attempted to unscrew it. Suddenly the wrench slipped off the filter and I banged my knuckles, splitting them open against the steel of a rod. I swore and went to try again. After a solid hour of this I finally gave up. When I got out from under the truck, I realized that my dad had been outside working on something by the garage. I reddened, for from the look he was giving me, I knew that he had witnessed my long struggle. My dad is the type of man that gets things done, no matter the difficulty, and expects the same of me. For this reason, I feel embarrassed when I can’t do something. He walked over and asked me what the problem was. I explained to him how I couldn’t get the oil filter out because there wasn’t enough room since I had forgotten to put the truck up on ramps. He looked at me for a second, then told me to never say that I couldn’t do something. He then went under the truck. I saw him go through the same process that I had, trying to do it by force, yet instead of bloody knuckles and frustration, he remained calm and free of oil or blood. He rolled out from underneath the truck and stood there for a minute, then walked back to the garage. My dad then came back with strap-type oil filter wrench. He went under with it, and came back out in a few minutes. This time he stood there thinking for slightly longer than the first. He placed the wrench on the ground and proceeded to take his belt off and went back in underneath the truck. I was filled with curiosity, wondering what in the world he was doing. Within thirty minutes, he had taken the oil filter out and screwed in the new one, then poured in the new oil and turned the truck on. I was in awe. He had done it with his belt, which I never would have thought of. With his creativity and perseverance, he had done a job that had seemed impossible.

(4) Just as my dad is perseverant and creative, he is also understanding. Evidence of this is more recent. This past summer, I was invited to apply to a summer scholars program here at Notre Dame. However, I did not just learn academically. I also learned a tough lesson that I wish I hadn’t. Our first weekend there, my roommate Ed and a few others wanted to have a party and were looking for a way to obtain alcohol. I was not against having a good time, but I disagreed with the timing. I did not think it was a good idea to do this on the first weekend, or at all, since we had signed a contract saying that we would not take part in anything involving alcohol. Nevertheless, I joined them. The upperclassmen had told us many stories about parties and drinking. I had also

grown up thinking that this was what college was all about because of media, and that everyone did it, all of which made it seem more acceptable. Well, long story short, we were all caught and were kicked out of the program. When we received the email letting us know that we had been dismissed from the program, my stomach dropped. I dreaded making that call. Expecting to be severely reprimanded, I reluctantly picked up the phone and dialed. However, when I explained what had happened, my dad told me that it was okay. I could tell that he was enormously disappointed, but at the same time he let me know that he understood. He let me know that he had been young once and it is all too easy to make mistakes. He told me that as long as I learned from these mistakes, I would grow as a person and become a better man. I was humbled. I had been expecting to be harshly punished. I realized that this had a deeper impact on me than any punishment would have had, and I knew that I would not make a mistake like this again. If I would have taken a second to think about what my dad would think about me taking part in this, I wouldn't have done it. I now knew what it felt like to actually disappoint my dad, and I knew I never wanted to go through that again. At this moment in time I felt an immense gratitude for how understanding he was, and it was made clear to me how important this trait is.

(5) Nine years after I was close to losing my dad, I still hold him high regard. There are many things that he has taught me throughout my life, and continues to do so to this day, even though I no longer see him every day. I call him on a regular basis to talk about how school is going for me, and I ask about how work is going for him. He is also the first person I talk to whenever anything major happens, or when there is a major decision that I must make. When I was a kid, he was a lot more straightforward with me, and gave me specific instruction. Now, however, as I am an adult, his advice is vaguer, as he believes that every man must make his own decisions. He now offers more guidance than instruction, which I know I will always count on now and into the future. He is also a constant reminder to me that I should never forget where I'm from, and how important background and culture are, because they take part in the forging of a man. My dad has shown me that I should work for success as well as help others achieve their own. He has also demonstrated to me that through perseverance and creativity I can solve any problem that I am faced with. Through his empathy and understanding, my dad is able to convey his point across to me in an effective way. He has instilled in me many crucial values and beliefs. I have a deep respect for my dad and his lifestyle, which is why I seek to model my life after his. My dad is truly someone I look up to. He is truly a man to admire.