



A Letter to the friend who doubled as a role model

Dear friend,

You probably didn't realize what you were doing when it was happening, but you changed my life and you did it for the better. You encouraged me to be who I am today, and gave me someone to look up to as a role model. A huge part of what made this so great was that you weren't doing any of it to receive recognition or praise; it was just who you are and how much you cared about the people around you. So after all the hard work you've done, let me take a moment and tell you some things I should have a while ago.

First, let me tell you I'm sorry.

I'm sorry that I never told you that the little things you did every day without noticing were shaping me into a better person and giving me someone to strive to be like in my life. It was the small things you did that made me feel great about myself and led me to take note that you were an amazing person. I don't think I've ever heard you say a negative word and I know I have never seen you give up. I know that if I had been someone's role model, I would have wanted to know.

Second, let me tell you that all the little things you did that made all the difference to me.

I struggled with feeling like I never "fit in" and was sometimes stuck in classes full of people older or younger than me. Even though you were older than me, you treated me like an equal and never valued what I had to say less just because I was younger. I appreciated you never belittling me even in a joking manner, and always including me in different events and activities that went on both inside the classroom and out. These actions showed how much of a caring and compassionate person you were and encouraged me to be like you so that others could experience what I did through our friendship.

Third, I want to tell you that I appreciated how much you listened to me.

Knowing you were always there to listen to me really helped me push through tough times and know that you would always be there for me rain or shine. When I talked you truly just wanted to listen to me and help give me any advice you could and make sure I was OK. I cannot thank you enough for not leaving situations alone when I said things were fine. Having me talk about and sort out my feelings really helped eliminate a lot of my stress.

Finally, even though I may not see you all the time, you are still shaping me today.

Even though I may not see you all that often, I don't think I have left every memory and trait I learned from you behind. You taught me to be kind-hearted, to always say "hi" to new people and not be afraid to stand up for things that were right. You showed me so many different things that I may not have noticed if it hadn't been for our friendship. So thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Me