

# To my dead homie

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence. My life changed in September of 2009 when I met my good friend Nate Thomas. It all began in the Halls of Roman Catholic High School. I had dreamt of the day I could finally wear purple and gold with pride and represent Roman. However, my first day of school was very different than expected. In middle school, I was used to being known by fellow students and teachers throughout the hallways, in the cafeteria and on the basketball court, but at Roman I had to start all over.

I was in unfamiliar territory and in need of immediate guidance and friendship. On my first day, I was unloading books out of my locker, when a 4 foot 2 fellow freshman arrived at the locker next to me to do the same. We introduced ourselves and realized, regardless of our noticeable height difference, that we shared many things in common. From that moment, Nate became one of my best friends and someone I could count on for anything. Nate was born with pulmonary tricuspid atresia, which basically means he was born with the complete absence of the tricuspid valve.

Aside from Nate's height, no one could tell he had a congenital heart disease. Nate was not only at every Roman basketball game, but could be heard cheering the loudest in the gym. He never once complained about his illness, but rather embraced each day as a gift with a positive spirit. When I faced obstacles or setbacks, Nate was quick to offer guidance not judgement. One of the biggest setbacks for me occurred on the basketball court. As a junior, I was excited to be an upperclassman and help contribute to a talented varsity team.

However, to my dismay I was put on the Junior Varsity team. At first, I was discouraged, angry, and an overall miserable person. I thought " How could they do this to me? I had forever dreamt of being a member of the Varsity team. " My initial reaction of negativity and pity for myself is not something I am proud of as I look back on my experiences. After confiding in Nate about not making Varsity, he asked me " How much do I enjoy playing basketball and what was I willing to do to prove I deserved to be on the Varsity team? I realized that was his way of telling me to " get over it and work harder. " Nate made me realize that all obstacles challenge us and help us grow stronger whether it be mentally, physically or both. I ended up playing both Junior Varsity and Varsity my junior year because of my work ethic and drive to compete with the best. I credit this to Nate and his ability to make every situation a positive one. As I embark on my senior year at Roman, I begin to reflect on the person I have become today and continue to grow into.

Nate's guidance, advice and friendship is something I will never forget nor take for granted. His genuine kindness and happiness is something I hope to emulate throughout the years to come. Some would say Nate lost his fight against this illness on August 13, 2012, but I think through his passing he has left an even greater legacy on us all and now continues watching over us and pushing us to live life with his same positive spirit and drive to be the best we can.

As I look back on my 3 years at Roman and think about things I considered setbacks, I am able to see the bigger picture. Yes I was devastated about not initially making the Varsity team, but I now realize it was the bigger picture of not giving up and working hard in a positive way to achieve my goals,

which was Nate's advice. So while yes Nate and I were the same age and met as two Freshman on the first day of school, he was wise beyond his years and someone I call my friend, mentor, brother, but most of all my hero.