

A Smile Is Worth a Thousand Words

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I felt alone. I felt more than alone. I felt invisible. Everything that had once been so perfectly constructed in my life was now falling into a period of never ending disaster. Every single one of my friends had left me without a reason, betrayed me for something I never even thought about doing. No one wanted to be friends with the weird girl at school--the girl who didn't fit in. I dared to stand out and this was what I got for it. Most people think, "That's just middle school drama. You'll get over it." But this wasn't drama. This was bullying and I was now the victim. I couldn't trust anybody and sometimes I doubted that my own family members were there for me. It felt like everybody was on cue to leave me in the dust and never return I was a ghost, a shell of a girl that I used to know well. The tears never stopped at night. My earphones always stayed in my ears, and melancholy music caressed my mind. Nobody understood me. I didn't even understand myself. Where was Sydney Beaver that I knew? The only place I knew myself as happy was in my dreams. I dreaded going to school. I wanted to die. All I had to do was keep putting on that fake smile of mine and walk into those double doors, day after day.

It eventually got to the point where I got an online message from a girl at school, calling me things I never have ever been called before. I couldn't take it anymore. I stopped putting on that fake smile of mine and walked into a new door--the principal's office. J. Brim McCall is the vice principal at our school and he's now been with us for two years. It sounds like a short time, but he has impacted our school so much in the past and will continue to do it in the future. He taught me a few lessons these couple of years and probably will continue to do so. He has helped not only me, but many other kids who have been going through all the same stuff I went through in the seventh grade. He's been there for me when nobody else was. Most vice principal's just do what they'd get paid to do, but he does so much more than that. He has a personal relationship with the kids and takes care of them like they were his own. Coach McCall is more than a simple principal--he's a friend.

You can trust him. Trust is a huge word, I realize this. It takes time to actually trust the person and just a few seconds to lose it. Every time I ended up in his office to talk about what was happening, he would say that nobody else would find out about it. I would pour out everything

to him and I certainly don't do that very often. It's like he's a personal counselor too. You can tell him everything and anything and he isn't going to tell anybody else about it. (Unless you are going to harm yourself in some way.)

At the time, I didn't realize what I was going through until I explained it all to him. He listened and comforted me when I thought nobody else needed me in this world. Bullying gets into your mind and he understood that. He was the first person to understand who I was in a while. I was surprised at first that I could actually trust my vice principal. Weren't principals supposed to be all big and bad, ruling the school?--- Not comforting some little girl breaking down the office. He was the first person I trusted. He had put me on the road to recovery. I could trust a person. It was the best feeling in the world knowing I could actually trust someone.

He had a personal relationship with almost every kid in the school. Most people in our country today talk about money. We need money, want money, crave money. What Coach McCall does is completely priceless. He isn't just a principal, he's a friend. He is the person who always says "hello!" to you in the morning. He's the man walking around the halls checking on people. He runs the school perfectly and organized all while making friendships with kids walking down the halls. He's the kind of principal who jokes around with everyone and puts a smile on everybody's face.

When I was all alone, he was the one person I looked forward to seeing during the day--getting to tell him what was going wrong and listen to him tell me how to make it right. I see some students in our school who have no friends whatsoever. Sometimes it annoys me that everybody has the nerve to ignore them but then I remember they do have a friend. That, of course, is Coach McCall. It puts a smile on my face knowing that he isn't there just for me but he's there for everyone else too. The word "friend" didn't mean much until I lost all of my friends. I realize that friend can be anybody, now that I know what I know. A friend can even be your vice principal.

Last but not least, he's my teacher. He has given me the best gift that anyone can give me-- the gift of an education. The thought of learning something new everyday sparks my heart. He is preparing me for the future ahead of me. The future is scary but he makes it seem like a wonderful adventure worth looking forward to. He has hired marvelous teachers who have given me the ability to show how advanced my mind is. Every day, he encourages us to give 100% and we do it--just for him!

We may only be in middle school, but graduation will be here before we know it. Teenagers minds are filled with so much junk--music, clothes, love. We don't realize how much an education should mean to us. Coach McCall reminds us all how important schooling is in our lives and how grateful we should be to even have a school to go to. Every day we push as hard as we can to get the knowledge we need in life and Coach McCall is the one pushing us. Every test he forms helps us. Every lecture he gives inspires us. Every schoolbook bought and every lesson learned is because of his input to Mr. Satterfield, our superintendent.

I now have large dreams all because of him. I can achieve my dreams because in middle school I was given the knowledge needed to prepare for high school and so on. In the end, he saved me.

He saved me from thinking I was useless, worthless and a pile of broken pieces. Coach McCall taught me that everything was going to be okay. I just had to be patient and wait for the right time to come. So far, everything has gotten better. I still talk to the people who betrayed me but I know I would never trust them the way I used to. My grades have increased and sometimes I still have those small talks with him when everything starts to come falling down. Everything isn't just the way I wanted it to be, but it's as good as I could ever want it to get.

It's been a year now since my bullying fiasco and sometimes I think and realize how much that one person can change your life. People are put into your life for a reason and J. Brim McCall was put into my life for this reason. So, when the tears start rolling back into my brown, hazy eyes, I just remember who I need to go see. I remember who was always there for me when nobody else was. I remember the man who completely switched my middle school years around. I remember my Vice Principal, Mr. J Brim McCall.