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Role Model

What is a role model? People always claim to have one, so what exactly is it? I think there are probably several different definitions; the answer just depends on who is being asked. The dictionary defines a role model as a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. My definition of a role model is someone who has good *ABC*'s: action, behavior, and character.

The first part of my definition is good actions. For example, I have a cousin named Nick, who volunteered to serve in the Army after he graduated from college just because he felt he owed the country his life. He has been to Iraq four times, training local forces and fighting in the war. He has always been a great role model to me simply due to the fact that his action of not pursuing a civilian career so the others in his family might still have the freedom to do so was very admirable. I think that anyone who is willing to give up his or her life so that others might be benefited is definitely a role model.

The second part of my definition is good behavior. Some people put on a false image when they go out in public, and most cannot see through this façade. But for someone to be a role model, I think that he or she needs to always have all-around good behavior. My cousin Nick is a great example of this. He was once confronted by a certain individual who said some things about the military that were very disrespectful and then proceeded to insult Nick's family. Instead of resorting to violence, Nick kindly told the man that he was entitled to his opinion but

would be wise to watch his words in regard to a man's family because words like this are like a sword thrashing the honor of one's name. Nick politely told the man that most people value their good name, so he advised the man that insulting others is not a good practice. In situations like this one, Nick shows that his good behavior never wavers, making him an example for all to follow.

The last part is having good character. No one is perfect, especially role models. But it is what one does with these imperfections that makes people who they are. A key part to good character is a good attitude. Nick always tells me that everything in life is a mental challenge, and if one has the right mindset and the right attitude, only he or she stands in the way of completing that challenge. One thing Nick likes to tell me is that personalities can open doors, but it is character that keeps them open. He also says it is not the way that someone plays the game that shows the most about character but the way that person loses. Half of the time I think he sits around reading quotes that sound good just to sound smart, but it is the fact that he tries to help that counts. One thing that I have come to realize is that character is not something one is born with. It is forged in the struggles of life, and that is what makes role models who they are.

Being a role model is a huge responsibility because it is one of the most powerful forms of education. That is why it cannot be just simply defined as someone who is looked up to. There is much more to it. It is not the person that others look up to; it is his or her *ABC's*.