
JORDAN PRISBY

BY BLAKE MCKINLEY MAY 18, 2018

As I began to think about taking the time to affirm you today, I found it very difficult to actually begin writing something down: not because you don't have character, it is quite the opposite problem. There is too much to say. There is more to be said than can be contained in a single class period, or fit onto a single page of paper for that matter. So where do I start, Jordan?

I suppose we can start at the beginning, because the beginning is always a good place to start. When we first met, I was excited. You showed me that you are cautious, you were deep in thought, and you admitted something that I rarely admit: that "I don't know." I was excited because this told me you were ready for this class. You were open to new awarenesses. You were primed to think critically. You were in a place to admit that you do not know. Curiosity is the character trait that combines wisdom and humility. You did not pretend to have all of the answers, but you have made it your purpose to remain curious of what it was you are meant to learn. Keeping your eyes and ears open, you drink-in the moment; and when you have something profound to share, you open your mouth and elevate the experience of everyone who hears your words. That and more, you have truly realized your potential as a part of this class.

You are here because of your faith. Most of the students who consider taking Dr. McKinley's class are uncertain of what to expect, but you went for it anyway. And with this decision, you had to let go of the predefined idea of what scholastic achievement looked like. You decided that you would forgo the accolade of your school to seek a much loftier goal: you chose to pursue fulfillment. It is no surprise that despite your efforts being focused on this higher reward, achievement ensued. Not just any old achievement, it is a true achievement which is all the more meaningful and rewarding.

You possess the gift of influence; your peers are constantly looking up to you and taking their cues from you. You use this position of power as a cause for good. Your influence reaches beyond what you could possibly know. Not only do you show your authentic self to those who are near to you, you also reach out to a virtually infinite audience through stage and film. Whether you hold the mirror up to the audience so they can reflect deeply on their own circumstance, or you just provide a brief shimmer of pure entertainment that allows them to break free of the bondage of their daily lives, both are profoundly meaningful and important.

Jordan Prisby, you might be an actor, but you are not an act. You are real, you are sincere, you are genuine, and you are vulnerable...and only the strongest people can be vulnerable. It has been so much fun getting to know you throughout this year. Thank you. I have learned from you a great deal, and you have asked me questions which I had never considered before. At the beginning of the year, I was excited to have you as my student. Now, at the conclusion of your senior year at LHN, you have never been better equipped to step out into the world and do more than you can possibly dream, and that is truly exciting.

You are entering a world of a billion different paths, take one, and love every step of the way.