

Teagan Wright

My sister's favorite color was green, so my favorite color was green. My sister wanted to grow out her bangs in her hair, so I wanted to grow out my bangs. My sister started running, so I started running. My idol was not a celebrity or a teenager. It was my sister.

My running journey started because I wanted to be just like her. I remember training and steadily building my stamina and speed until I could run with her. We ran together almost daily until she and her twin sister joined the school cross country team. While they practiced with their team, I ran with my dad. During winter, we would bundle up, put on headlamps, and run after darkness had fallen. I had to be ready for the summer months, the time I could, once again, run with them.

I joined our school's cross country and track teams in seventh grade. I could finally be teammates with my sisters! Running together, we would bond over things that only runners understand. Through running, I have learned lessons that have shaped me into who I am today.

Running has shown the importance of dedication. It proves that success is possible with long-term commitment. Much like hilly roads, there will always be ups and downs of challenges. Running has taught me to care for details, as they make a difference. It has made me realize that I must care for myself and prepare for whatever comes at me. As I push past the stormiest weather, I have learned that I always come out on the other side stronger.

Running is more than races. It is a journey. One that allows me to participate both with others or on my own. I find comfort in running with others. I enjoy spending time with people who share my passion and finding a bond with those willing to go the extra mile. There is also a peace that comes with running on my own. The repetition of my feet striking the ground allows me to clear my mind and reflect. I can soak in my surroundings or get lost in my own world. Either way, I am provided the chance to escape and recharge. Running allows me to embrace my love of the outdoors and excites me about my college decision, where I will have new places to run and explore. I will attend South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in the fall.

Running will be integral to my experience as I head to college. I have committed to my college's distance running team. I will build new connections with teammates as I forge my path. The lessons I have learned through running will guide me at college and as I push into adulthood. As I reflect, I am thankful for the journey that running has taken me on starting all those years ago. Although our paths have twisted and turned, I always look forward to summers and running with my sister.