

Like Father, Like Daughter

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4333 Longmeadow Drive: the location of my childhood home, the place where I grew up, established morals, brought home my first puppy, learned to throw a softball, and played H.O.R.S.E. with my brother and dad countless times. 4333 Longmeadow Drive is a place that I will remember for the entirety of my life because of the love that was cultivated there.

I am a firm believer that God blesses everyone. I was blessed with a stable home and a loving family. Growing up with married parents was one of the biggest blessings of my youth. My father has worked within the supply chain management of medical instruments and my mom is considered a stay-at-home mom even though her duties drastically exceed her title. My brother and I challenged each other through our academic and athletic endeavors; he is a major reason why I am so competitive.

Throughout my childhood, Dad would go on frequent trips to China for reasons I did not understand. I thought he was going on vacation without me! When Dad was traveling, we had plenty of “mom time” which always included the planning of a welcome home sign or making his favorite dinner for the night of his return. This time with our mom allowed us to bond but resulted in a desire to have both parents around and present in our lives as a whole family of four.

What made my dad so great was that not only did he manage a very successful professional career, but he invested every single minute outside of his professional career into his family. My mom and dad did not have a solid family foundation when they grew up which is a major reason why it was emphasized so much in ours. He wanted to create a life for us that he and my mother did not experience for themselves. A life with happily married and present

parents, financial stability, and endless opportunities: surprise! Together, my parents did just that.

When dad was home, we spent much time together as a family. My brother and I were signed up in every single team, class, camp, or school project offered, from T-ball to ballet, tap dance, gymnastics, softball, soccer, swimming, basketball, volleyball, club sports, speech meet, and spelling bee. If it was offered, we were involved. Not only was my dad the coach for more than half of the teams my brother and I competed on, but he worked with us on our athletic ability outside of our team practices. While sitting on a bucket catching my softball pitches, when things would get sloppy, he would say, "Focus!" "Don't be lazy," and "I'm not going to sit here if you're giving half effort." When I became interested in volleyball and we did not have a volleyball net at home, we would past back and forth over our soccer net and serve across the street to build up my simple, yet technical skills. When my brother was pitching for his middle school baseball team, Dad would yell "LST" which stood for Lift, Step, Throw. Unfortunately, LST is very close in pronunciation to LSD, commonly known as acid. He had explained his acronym a few times to avoid the uncomfortable stares by the parents around. Regardless, these phrases would stick with me for a long time.

When choosing a college at the ripe age of fifteen, I looked to my parents for great advice. Of course, I have been blessed with a family in a much different financial and family situation than they had when picking a university. I trusted their knowledge because they have educated themselves on what they did not experience within their own college experience. At that young age, I made decisions that would impact the rest of my life such as the career and industry I would pursue, whom I wanted to be my boss/coach, whom I wanted to work/play

with, all very similar decisions that my dad has made throughout his career. Unfortunately, I made decisions which led to transferring, but not without a learning experience that can be applied to just about anything in my future career. Experiences of how to leave a job on good terms, say goodbye, cultivate new relationships, and learn how to work for a new boss are all experiences which my dad has had throughout his career. Luckily, I could receive his guidance and wisdom as I navigated these waters.

As I have grown older, I have seen and experienced to some extent how difficult it is to balance work, family, and other commitments. As a third-year college athlete, I have learned to manage practice, games, lift, treatment, nutrition, class, tests, assignments, relationships, character, values, morals, and maintaining a schedule packed with other various things. Looking back to my freshman year, I can see exponential personal growth that leaves me in awe of my maturity and responsibility. It is safe to say that I am more developed in the time-management skill than others of my age and position thanks to the opportunities available to me and the mentorship of my parents.

The pursuit of a career that fits my passion, financial needs, and career desires was strongly encouraged by my dad. Through internships, extra on-campus activities, and applying my “job” as a Division 1 college athlete to various opportunities wouldn’t be possible without the support I have coming from home. This support has been unwavering as I have changed my major not one, not two, not three, but four times; from Nursing to Business Administration to Marketing and now, adding Supply Chain Management to follow in my father’s footsteps.

Supply Chain Management is “the management of relationships in the network of organizations, from end customers through original suppliers, using key cross-functional

business processes to create value for customers and other stakeholders” (Lambert, 2014, p. 2). Supply Chain Management is often thought of as logistics, purchasing, quality, and other elements of bringing a product to life, yet it is more-so the relationships between suppliers, distributors, and customers. It is about meeting the demand with exceptional intrapersonal skills and relationship building, a very important aspect that businesses cannot function without.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, issues within the supply chain became ever-apparent with shortages of various products needed by the consumer on a daily basis. Those being toilet paper, bicycles, home office stations, pool chlorine, and home workout equipment (Pandemic Shortages: Products We've Struggled to Find during Covid, 2021). Consumers went into a frenzy to acquire some of these products after the government-led lockdowns of COVID-19 in 2020. In line with the lockdowns, many employers limited their staff strictly to the most essential employees. With a worldwide increase in demand of certain products and limited staff, it is understandable how the supply chain could not keep up with the needs of the community.

When disruptions or failures within the supply chain occurs, such as during the pandemic, there becomes an abnormally high importance to get products to the consumers who desire them and to meet the market demand. With a shortage of select products, and excess consumers with high desire (as well as other measures that add to the product price), it becomes extremely easy and (and essential) to raise prices to support the extra measures going into the creation and distribution of the product. The combination of high demand, desperate

customers, and extra measures for safety and other measures such as expedited shipping and processing, it can easily be seen how the product prices rose over the course of the pandemic.

Aside from the products that surged during the pandemic, it became difficult to maintain a sturdy supply of life-saving products. One specific example that can impact *millions* of people is the supply chain of surgical instruments. As an External Contract Manufacturing Manager for a leading multinational surgical instrument distributor, Al Shoopman has seen and dealt with the impact of COVID-19 on his distribution processes firsthand. He claims that the combination of lockdowns, sick workers, and the lack of workers, there have been many slowdowns within the incoming ports in California, which is where he receives all his purchased products from overseas. Prior to the pandemic, he claimed to be very skilled in ordering the right amount of product and getting it to the customer with little error within 2-4 weeks. In the supply chain management world, this is known as JIT or Just In Time. However, since the pandemic, there have been slowdowns at every point along the way to getting the product to the end consumer. His 2–4-week shipments now take over six months and he is incurring costs for keeping extra stock in his warehouses. Overall, his job has become cost management, rather than driven by quality service (Shoopman, Al, Personal Communication, 2022).

After pinpointing that the largest supply chain disruption within my dad's supply chain is taking place in the California ports, one solution would be to create more incentives to work. After getting through the thick of the pandemic, Al is still dealing with issues with the California ports and the lack of workers to efficiently transport product from the cargo ships to truck and trains for transportation. His connections shared that there are enough people, but not enough *willing to work* in the shipyards for the current pay rate even though it has risen since prior to

the pandemic. To increase incentives to work, it may be best for companies to re-evaluate their employee benefit packages if increasing salary is not a feasible option. Increasing the salary and/or re-evaluating the employee benefits packages incurs costs. With these costs, it can also impact the product pricing. It will be a difficult, yet new problem to solve as a result of the pandemic.

Not to fear, the ladies are almost here. As the supply chain industry's shortcomings and failures have been exposed and highlighted over the past two years, there have been a surge of graduates looking to explore opportunities in the supply chain fields. As a growing industry, not only are there more graduates entering the field, but more females are completing their degrees. A Gartner study found that female Full-Time-Employee's in the supply chain industry has risen from 35% in 2016 to 39% in 2019 (Kroll, Karen, 2020). Another study by the MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics "Women in Supply Chain Initiative" states that 41% of the supply chain workforce are women and that women constitute 15% of senior vice president, executive vice president, and C-suite jobs in supply chain (MIT CTL Women in Supply Chain Initiative, 2022). In effort to have a more even male to female ratio in the supply chain industry, several organizations have taken big steps to encourage females in exploration of their passions. The MIT Women in Supply Chain Initiative's (WISCI) goal is to not only understand gender balance in supply chain management but to create tools for gender balance within businesses (MIT CTL Women in Supply Chain Initiative, 2022). The MIT Women in Supply Chain Initiative creates a welcoming environment for mentorship, learning, and career development opportunities through events, outreach and engagement, their goal is to share experiences and insights to women in the industry. With organizations such as WISCI, there is

increased support, community, and awareness to create a positive outlook at the talent gender gap within the supply chain industry.

Meri Stevens, the Worldwide Vice President Deliver at Johnson & Johnson is an impactful industry leader with plenty of advice for the next generation. She describes her current role as “Driving global capabilities end to end for the benefit of our patients and consumers” (*Meri Stevens – LinkedIn, 2022*). While her current position holds prestige within an already-successful company, she has made strategic career decisions to get her where she is today. Starting at GE, for 11 years, she was involved with Operations Management, Supply Chain, and the Manufacturing Management Program. From there, she held positions such as VP of e-business of purchasing, VP of Strategic Sourcing, VP of Global Operations, Chief Supply Chain Officer, President, VP of Supply Chain Strategy & Deployment, and now the Worldwide Vice President of Supply Chain- Consumer Health & Deliver at Johnson and Johnson. Meri Stevens has the credibility to her name; she has had an extremely successful career in the supply chain industry regardless of her gender. Her advice to women in the field is to be bold, work hard, be confident in yourself, and build critical skills such as analytics and data science to help make and support your decisions (Kroll, Karen, 2020). She also believes that her skills as a female and mother have allowed her to be great at managing complexity. Women often manage work, life, children, school, a household, etc. and because of those duties, she believes managing complexity in the workplace can be handled easier.

As stated earlier, Al Shoopman has been in the Supply Chain industry for much of his career. His time in the purchasing and distribution areas of surgical instruments has not only shaped his view on how the world works, but as I have grown older, mine as well. The labor

shortage that America is facing right now has made his day-to-day work-related decisions much more difficult. These difficulties include the time it takes to order and receive a product, commonly known as lead time, manufacturing plant's capacity decrease, transportation shortages, and an increase in various fees, taxes, and costs along the way. All of which create a more expensive product for the end consumer or lower margins for businesses in the supply chain for that product.

Al began his career as a high school shop teacher, but quickly found his way into a position as a production supervisor at Modine which manufactures heat transfer units for homes, schools, cars, and more. Since his first supply chain position at Modine, he has held titles such as production planner, purchasing planner, materials manager, director of purchasing, and is now a third party finished good contract manufacturer.

While he does not brag about his success in the industry, I know that my father has done a great job within his various roles. Through his ability to provide the essentials for our family, vacations, competitive sports, private education, and some college education costs, his career has supported him well. In the past, he has told the stories of his promotions, and his biggest advice to my brother and I is to 1) live below your means, 2) put your investment or raise in investments rather than spending it right away. Rainy days come and you need to be prepared, 3) put God, family, and friends at the forefront of your life- they are constants in your life, work can change any day (Shoopman, Al, Personal Communication, 2022). Through my dad's hard work and determination, he has created a new life for himself and his family. He knows what it takes to be a great dad, husband, son, and employee.

Similarly to my dad, I like to think of myself as a driven person, someone who takes pride in completing useful work. These desires have landed me two great internships in completely different industries. As a Sales Intern for Gallagher in the Summer of 2021, I was exposed to their sales operations of one of the best performing branches of one of the top insurance brokers in the nation. I experienced first-hand what it is like to work an 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. lifestyle in a cubicle, completing computer work each day for nine weeks. I met great leaders and co-workers and could see myself in a similar role post-graduation in 2024. Currently, I am working for the Major League Soccer team in town, Nashville Soccer Club. Within this position, I have been exposed to the operations of the marketing department and their goals to promote the club and increase the fan base. Both internship positions have led to great exposure of the different working styles, industries, and everyday tasks. I am thankful for these opportunities to gain a better perspective of what the right fit for my future career could be.

Just as I grew up in a household that emphasized being God-fearing, hardworking, and driven in everything I do, that is the type of company I want to work for. My parents' instillation of high values and morals is what I have carried with myself to this point of my education, and I look forward to continuing those ethics throughout my professional career. My biggest personal values are to be kind, treat others as I would like to be treated, and be the hardest worker in the room. I believe if those values are maintained in everything I put my hands on, I can do anything I set my mind to. I was a stubborn child; most of the time, not in my best interest. In the same way, I will be stubborn with setting goals and aspirations for myself to achieve my desired level of success and self-stability.

I am an outlier as a female headed into the supply chain industry. According to the dictionary, an outlier is “something that is situated away from or classed differently from a main or related body” (Review: *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell, 2008). However, Malcom Gladwell in his book *Outliers* considers an outlier to be “a truly exceptional individual who, in his or her field of expertise, is so superior that he defines his own category of success” (Review: *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell, 2008).

It is my goal to think of myself and those I work with along the way as *professionals* in the field and to not make any excuses, “ifs”, “ands”, or “buts” for my performance and work. Entering a male-dominated field does not mean that as a female I am less-than or need special privileges or assistance to do great things like those before my time. I am extremely excited to see how I can make an impact within a booming industry and for a company with a great mission, values, and ethics.

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