

An average person meets two people in a day. That makes 730 people a year. Throughout my life, I have met more than twenty thousand people. I have learned tremendously from others and I hope I have been influential in their lives vice versa. One person in particular had an extraordinary affect on me. He has been the most intellectually influential human being I have come across. That person was my grandfather.

My grandfather was born [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This was one of the bloodiest and significant periods in Ukrainian history. The civil and the First World War had devastated the country and its people. Beginning in 1928, as part of The Five Year Plan, independent farmers were forced to give up their land, livestock, and equipment. Any opposition to collectivization was met by brutal force as Secret Police and Red army units were sent to villages to forcefully collect grain; which was a quota determined by the government for each household. They also forcefully obtained any food they could find. As a result, thousands of villagers died from starvation. My grandfather [REDACTED] when he lost his parents during this brutal time. He would steal grain at night from the fields in order to survive with his younger brother, whom he had to care by himself.

The closest school was located two miles away from the village. The only way to get there was by walking. My grandfather walked four miles a day in order to attend school without owning a pair of shoes. He was determined to get an education and live a better life. He became the only person in his village that graduated from high school. Furthermore, he was the only person from high school who was accepted to the most prestigious [REDACTED]. He became the only graduate to be honored as a distinguished surgeon of the Russian Federation. He continued his successful career as a Chief Surgeon of the military hospital in Moscow maintaining his title for [REDACTED]. His inspiring story of struggle and survival has been an example not only to me, but for many young students and scholars who look up to him in Russia.

Inspired by the accomplishments of my grandfather, I graduated [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] After my studies, I traveled more than four thousand miles from my hometown to continue my journey in New York, one of the most challenging and competitive cities I have lived in. Despite the hardships, I have learned that such circumstances are vital in making me a strong and a more resilient person like my grandfather. He has taught me that determination and ambition are essential in one's road to success and to overcome any obstacle in life. Following on his path, I am determined to pursue my ambitions and become as notable and recognized in my field as my grandfather was in his.