

WDSO

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*“Oh, my gosh! What was I thinking? I should have never decided to do this. I am going to sound awful. Oh, gosh, the music’s over. I gotta talk... is that what the red light means?”*

“Umm... good morning, it is time for your ten-thirty edition of the WDSO news. Uh... the current temperature is 36 degrees,” I said in screechy, high-pitched voice.

That was my first experience on the air—ever. I was so nervous about doing the news that I spent thirty minutes preparing for a five-minute newscast. Although I was never paid for my work at the radio station, it was the best job I ever held. Working on the radio station throughout my four years of high school taught me more about myself than I had known.

When I began high school, I had my own group of friends. We acted, dressed, and viewed life similarly. I was comfortable with them and didn’t see the need to extend myself to others. Coming from a conservative Catholic family, I felt sheltered until high school I believe there were “bad” people, and I would never get along with them. As the promotions director, training director, and music director, I had many opportunities to work with different members of the radio station. One guy I worked with had particular effect.

Jim was the complete opposite of me. He was extremely loud, he smoked, didn’t believe in God, had a terrible temper, and was not someone who I would have normally sought out as a friend. After working with him,

I realized that even though we were two completely different people, we could still find something to talk about. He became a friend I could talk to when I had a problem. My friendship with Jim taught me not to judge others based on their outward appearance. While Jim wasn't a saint and was rough around the edges, he was capable of being a great listener when I needed that. Even now, if I begin to judge a person, I remember him and how important it is to avoid judging others.

While holding my position at WDSO, I learned the importance of responsibility. As disk jockeys, we were required to be in the studio when scheduled. Everyday our station began its broadcast at 6 am with the first newscast airing at 6:30. One Monday morning, I went in to gather news for the newscast and noticed that the disk jockey hadn't shown up yet. It was a quarter after six, and I barely got the news compiled. I experienced first-hand what it is like when people don't follow through on their responsibilities. I use this understanding for completing my obligations; for instance, if I don't help my sister clean the house, the task of cooking and cleaning is much more difficult for all of us. My mom must clean the kitchen first, then be able to cook. Being responsible helps everyone.

After my four years at the station, I became more assertive than I was when I started. Prior to my freshman year, I never stood up for my beliefs, and I let people take advantage of my good graces. I would keep quiet until exploding on the nearest person. When I began at WDSO, I knew that this wouldn't be tolerated. I was put to the test that year when I was promoted to promotions director. That is when I met Shawn. He was two years older and had more connections at the station than I did, so he was upset that I received the promotion. All of his friends were angry and

made life pretty miserable for me at work. I was ready to quit, but I finally fought back. Once I stood up for myself they gained respect for me. I was more than a co-worker and more of a little sister to them. I learned that vocalizing my feelings didn't make people hate me. When I spoke my mind, they started treating me with more respect, and now I'm no longer scared of saying what is on my mind.

The greatest reward for being a member of WDSO was my ability to overcome my fear of talking to others. In middle school, I had pretty low self-esteem, but being behind the microphone I could open up. I couldn't see if listeners were laughing at me or agreeing with me. I also like the anonymity of being behind the microphone; not many people knew me, but I began to develop some loyal listeners who would call in with their support. As time progressed, I approached people that I barely knew and began conversations. I found out that people weren't as bad as I'd imagined. At the end of my senior year, two hundred people came to my graduation party. For the courage to meet other people and become involved in their lives, I will ever be indebted to WDSO.

I often wonder how I would be now if I hadn't made the choice to join the station. Would I be as self-confident? Would I be as friendly? Would I be as conscientious? I can't be absolutely sure about how I would have turned out, but I think that it was the radio station alone that helped bring me out of my shell.