

## **Music Memories**

By Rivers Ashton

Music helps me express, improve, and understand my emotions. Music is such an essential part of my life, and I use music frequently in my daily life. My everyday routine is to listen to music while in the shower, on the way to class, and when I hang out with friends. I didn't realize that piece was so important to my mental health. I often find that music helps boost my mood and makes me happier. I notice myself listening to music that reflects how I feel. If I am upset, I listen to sad music that I can find comfort in. Doing this makes me realize why I may be feeling a certain way and somehow makes me feel better. Music has so much control over my life in such a positive way. I am so thankful for such a wonderful outlet that I can use to understand myself. Music is very significant to me.

Music is significant because it helped me get through hard times and cheered me up. I have had many times where I have struggled mentally, but one specific memory comes to mind when I think of how music helped me cheer up. The song "Lost in Japan" by Shawn Mendes helped me get through my long-distance relationship. I have been dating David for over two years and most of that time has been spent apart. I recall our first-time meeting being at a mall without our parents' knowing. He had only 2 hours to hang out with me, but that short amount of time sadly flew by. We hung out in a Bass Pro Shop and talked about literally everything. The strong smell of the perfume I wore still burns bright in my memory just as the smell of fish that was around us. After he left, two days went by, and we were already missing each other. That night he asked me to be his girlfriend, and ever since then, it has been history. We've been very close since the first time we met, but we struggled with the distance. We would get sad when we

would remember being together for the short amount of time we had every few months. Dating him was one of the best decisions, and all the hardships we went through were worth it. We worked with what we had, and one of the few things we could use to connect with was music.

Meeting David was such an important event in my life, and I am lucky to have him. I think that without having this person in my life, I wouldn't be myself. I've learned to love and accept myself because of him. I am grateful that he has impacted my life in such a unique way. The song that I have associated with this significant memory has such an interesting connection. I think to both David and me; we saw a parallel to our situation and what was going on in the song. "Lost in Japan" talks about wanting to fly to their significant other that they are separated from and spend time with them. They long to be around the other person, and this hits home for my relationship. I struggled to be away from David, and when I would listen to that, it would make me feel happy and cheer me up. When we would sing it together, for some reason, it comforted me that he thought the same way I did. I feel that this song helped me stay positive and to keep fighting for my relationship. It felt impossible to keep fighting and holding on to what I had, but this song gave me motivation. I learned that without music, it is so easy to lose faith in yourself and give up. So, having music in my life can help me get through any hard time I am going through.

Music is important because it reminds me of how much people have influenced and inspired me to better myself. I have had many different influences in my life, but one person in particular comes to mind. My high school art teacher, Mr. H. I associate the song "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac with him. Throughout high school, Mr.H has been my art teacher. He would never go a day without playing music in his class, and "Dreams" was the one I would hear the most. I would wait for him during his morning duties while he played his favorite songs. I

remember listening to all his life advice and funny stories he loved to tell. I also remember sitting in his class while he picked on me for my mistakes. The art room smelled like cheap acrylic paint because of the walls being covered by colorful murals painted by the students that filled the room with their presence and laughter. I spent most of my time with him, and I think it shows my humor and artistic abilities.

I have connected my high school art teacher's influence with this song because he listened to it. He always listened to this music during class because it was "Old fart Friday," but when he was on duty in the morning, he would play that station. I grew a lot as a person and as an artist because of his classes. When I hear this song, I remember how much of an inspiration Mr. H was. He believed in me and brought the best out of me. I would not be nearly as successful without his teaching and his motivation. I learned that having someone who can push you to be better is very important. When I hear that song, I feel inspired and it makes me work harder. I hope that other people have songs that can bring those inspirational memories out.

Music is important to me because it helped me reflect on myself and be proud of the person I was becoming. There were many times where I sat down and thought about my future and how I was going to adjust to being alone. I quickly realized that going off to college and leaving your family is such a difficult thing to do. I was always a homebody, so I was terrified to leave. The drive to Western was miserable, and I tried to keep myself from crying by listening to music. For some reason, that drive made me want to listen to a song called "My Future" by Billie Eilish. This song talks about how she is excited about her future, even though she has no idea what it will be like. She was okay with the uncertainty, something I was struggling with. I remember the smell of my Dad's farts in the car and all the lectures I received about being an adult. The moment I got to Western and started to say my goodbyes to my family, I began to

think about myself. Was I ready to be on my own? Did I prepare myself for all the hurdles I had to overcome? All this uncertainty depleted my emotional health. After my family had left, the only thing that I found comfort in was listening to that song. I just needed to put some faith in myself and my future. I needed to relax and be okay with whatever happened.

Moving to Western Illinois University was such a hard decision to make. On my way to WIU, I thought about my future, and the song by Billie Eilish made me think hard about my decision. It made me realize that I would be working toward my end while going to this school, and it was the right decision. Moving away was a life-changing situation, but it has pushed me to fight for my future and mature into an adult. I think that using music as a way to help you realize what you're doing is essential. Looking for your future and loving what you're doing are important. Always take risks, as I did. It pays off.

Music is significant because it helped me realize how important and lucky I am to have such beautiful people in my life. I would assume everyone has someone important in their life, but I honestly think I was blessed with such caring people. My dad and I have always been super close. I am not sure why we are so close, but I had a moment of realization one day. About two years ago, I was obsessed with this band called BTS. Their music helped me get through so many rough times in my life. I was able to convince my dad to get tickets to one of their concerts. I will admit that he has spoiled me from time to time, but I felt like going to this concert was my destiny. We flew out to Chicago in the middle of a school week to see this band that I had been obsessed with. The memory that stuck with me the most was when the group started to sing a song called "Jamais Vu." I was already super emotional when the music started. I looked over to my dad while singing, he had a beer in his hand and was dancing along with me during the whole concert. I saw how happy he was to be with me and see me smiling. I had a

moment where I just stopped dancing and stared at him. I realized how lucky I was to have a dad who dropped everything for some silly concert in another state. It's kind of funny because now, when I hear that song, I remember his dumb expression while he made fun of me for being overly excited. I would say that now, looking back at it, I am a daddy's girl.

The connection would be that when I heard that specific song at the concert, I realized how grateful I was to have such a supportive dad. It changed my life because I finally saw how many nice things my dad had done for me. He spent so much money to fly me out to see some band that doesn't even speak English. I think the audience could learn that having music makes you reflect on what you have and makes you feel thankful for the people around you.

I want people to consider how much music impacts not just an individual but a whole population. Music makes me reflect on my past and helps me better your future. It helps me reassure myself that I am making the right choices and gives me the confidence to keep going. Music helps me understand the loving relationships and support I have in my life and increases my gratitude for them. Music has changed me into the person I am today, a person I am really proud of, and I hope it can have the same impact on other people too.