



Craig Biggio and Human Decency

Writing prompts, discussion questions, and audio transcript

ABOUT THE STORYTELLER

Gordon Center has been a middle school teacher in Texas for the past fifteen years.

Talk it Out

Read the following quote from basketball player Charles Barkley:

I'm not a role model...just because I dunk a basketball doesn't mean I should raise your kids.

Now discuss:

Do you agree with Charles Barkley's statement? What do you think he means by "raise your kids"? Explain your answer.

Often role models are also referred to as heroes. Do you think the two terms are interchangeable? Create a list of attributes for an ideal role model and one for a hero.

What responsibility do you think role models have to those who look up to them? Explain your answer. Would you want to be someone's role model?

Brainstorm a list of people you think are worthy of being role models.

Write it Out

Choose one of the following prompts and write 1-2 pages, double-spaced:

- Pretend that you are a famous movie star and you have just visited a sick child in the hospital. As you are leaving the child's hospital room, you

bump into a journalist who says she's going to write a big story about how great you are because you've come to visit that sick child. Write up a scene in which you try to persuade the journalist not to write that story. Be sure to include dialogue.

- Think of someone in your life who has been there for you when you are having a hard day. Write a thank you note to that person. (Consider whether you want to send that note sometime.)
- Imagine or remember a moment when you supported someone else during a difficult time. Write a diary entry describing the incident, whether real or imagined. Be sure to include a description of your feelings.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE AUDIO MEMORY, Craig Biggio on Human Decency

You know, I'm not the biggest fan of professional sports, because I don't think kids should look up to professional athletes, because just because you can hit something really well or catch something or run really fast, that doesn't mean you're a good human being. And when Elliot [one of Gordon's students] was undergoing all these experimental treatments and surgeries, and Elliot spent pretty much every summer in the hospital having a treatment to help straighten his spine or to cut the muscles in his legs and help straighten those out—bones are being broken and redone—Craig Biggio came to visit him. He was just doing visits to the hospital and met Elliot, and then, for years, would not just stop by when Elliot was in the hospital, but would stop by his home and say hello and talk to him. And you never saw anything in the press about it; [Craig Biggio] never had anyone take photos; he never issued a press release; he didn't put selfies up on the web; he just did it. That's the other one I talk about with the kids, which is, if you're going to do something for someone else with the hope that someone's going to pat you on the back and give you a parade, you're doing it for the wrong reason. And the people we need to emulate and follow are the ones that just moment to moment are reaching out and trying to offer a hand to someone else when they're having a hard day.

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