This I Believe

For the past couple of years, I have become overwhelmingly introspective and self-aware. I often wonder what exactly it means to be a man in today's society and whether I am living up to what my grandfathers, my father, my brothers, or my friends expect of me. And although I am still far from completely understanding who I am and what it means to be a man, it has been through the relationships I have with the men in my life that I've been able to truly find myself.

I was born in 1990 in New York as the youngest of three boys and the son to already divorced parents. From an early age, I learned to adapt to an ever-changing environment as my parents split and then came back together several times throughout my childhood. As a result, I looked to my two brothers for stability and comfort, developing particularly intimate relationships with each of them. Dylan, only two years my elder, became my best friend and closest confidant. Sean, who is ten years older than me, became a second father figure. I relied on him to see me through my struggles as a young boy and looked up to him as the man I hoped to one day become. Neither one of them ever failed me and both have become exceptionally intelligent, wise, and understanding men. I could not ask for better friends.

For a long time, I distrusted any other male figure in my life, taking for granted that I would never develop any meaningful relationship that could come close to what I shared with my two brothers. It has only been in the past couple of years, in fact, that I've become close with my father again, a great man who has been through some hard times only to come out the other side all the wiser and stronger.

And the relationship I've developed with a professor and administrator here at Loyola over the past two years has taught me that having mentors in one's life is essential. It took me a very long time to realize that I could trust someone other than my family to mentor and guide me. But this one person has become an especially dear friend, and yet another person that has helped me to form my own idea of what it means to be myself.

I believe in the power of male mentorship. My personality, my interests, my hopes have all been shaped in one way another by the men I look up to in my life. And for that I am grateful; they are great men each in their own way. Now, as I prepare to graduate college, I am about to start my life as an independent man and I know for certain that although I may not be completely ready, I have people in my life who have allowed me to grow into a strong, confident person, and whenever I need guidance or advice I will always have them to turn to. Every young man should have such people. This I believe.