

Who Will Help Me When I Fall Down?

“If I am not for me who will be?
If am for myself alone, what am I?
And if not now, when?”

Rabbi Hillel
Pirkei Avot 1:14

When I first looked at Hillel’s quote, I immediately thought about the relationships I have in my life. In all the connections I share with people, whether it be my family friends, or others, I thought about whether or they were truly there for me. Are they? Would they respond if I fell down? Certainly my family is there for me, it’s a given. Our relationship comes from years of practice. We *should* have each others back. But what other is there for me when I fall down?

This made me ponder my other relationships with people I know. I’m not inside their heads with all their personal thoughts and beliefs. This caused me a little paranoia. Not knowing who you can trust may sound like a spy movie cliché, but when you think about it, lack of trust is a scary thought. We all need someone who will be there for us, to have a shoulder for us to lean on. But don’t worry, this feeling passed when I had an idea when the proverbial the light bulb went off in my head. I realized who besides my family has my back: my lacrosse team.

And I know what you might be thinking. Lacrosse team? You have to be kidding, right?

Well it’s true that we are a stereotyped group. When you think of a lacrosse team, numerous words probably spring into your head. Cocky. Arrogant. Brain-dead. Stoners. The other day, a friend told me, “We have a really bad rep for no reason. When I played football earlier in the year, a teacher would say, ‘Oh, you play football? You can leave five minutes early?’ But now that I’m a lacrosse player, its automatically, ‘Detention!’”

Individually, one or two kids may fit some of those stereotypes, but we are unbreakable group. All of us have one main ideal that we learned from lacrosse. Some of us learned it when we began playing early in grade school and the rest learned it later when they began playing in the beginning of high school. This ideal is camaraderie.

Every part of our game is working for the common good of the team, and the team assists the individual as well. Our team motto is “one more,” which directly means look for the extra and better pass in order to more easily score a goal. Bur “one more” doesn’t simply make the extra pass. It means we have to be there for our teammates when they’re down, and we have to support them through the thick and thin.

Just last week, one of our teammates went down with a broken leg on the faceoff. As soon as he hit the ground, the team fell silent. As he was taken off the field on a golf

cart, a thunder of cheers and applause erupted from the sideline. As soon as the game ended, and we loaded the bus back to the high school, everyone pulled out their phone and sent him a text message, a call, a voicemail, and other heartfelt words telling him we got his back and we wanted him to heal soon.

When I reflect upon this experience, I see it as a defining moment in our season. Unfortunately, my friend is done for the season, and it will take a long time to heal his injured leg; yet something special came from the unfortunate accident. In this moment, we came together not only as a team, but as a family. To cap of the glory of our fellowship, we dominated the rest of the game as a team, and were victorious as brothers.

The following day at practice, we had a guest speaker, Justin Constantine, from the Wounded Warrior Project. Justin had been a marine in Iraq when an insurgent sniper shot him in the head with a bullet, shattering his skull. Justin would have died, if it not had been for his brothers in arms. Immediately, another soldier he knew performed an emergency tracheotomy, and others rushed him to a base, despite the driving the laws, in order to save his life. Because of his comrades, Justin is still alive today and he is speaking to people across America. His moving words emphasized our brotherhood, and made us stronger as a united team.

And this is the essence of what Hillel is talking about, camaraderie. Hillel was saying people need to be there for each when they are in need, and one cannot hesitate when that time comes.

A team is like a family. It has special bonds and will pick you up when you fall, literally and metaphorically. Individually, one person cannot take on a formidable opponent, but together, they can stand and fight on the way to victory. So say what you want about lacrosse players. Try to beat us down. Try to put us in a corner. But you won't break our brotherhood.