On July 2014, a social media challenge began called “The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” to promote awareness of the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis disease. A month later, the challenge spread to a few of my relatives, friends, and eventually to me. I took great pride in participating knowing that my contribution along with millions of others would go a long way. At the time, I knew that my involvement could help those that are affected but little did I know it would affect someone in particular.

Out of all the people in this world, my own mother would eventually be diagnosed with this incurable disease. It’s been 3 years since these symptoms have shown and since then the course of my family’s life has constantly changed. During the first year, her speech was dealt the most damage but what struck me the most was the thought that she wakes up every morning knowing her life is now in constant danger and still manages to find the drive to keep working. She continuously supported me by attending my tennis matches, checking up on my relationship even though it was young love, and everything she’s always done for me. Before I knew how to handle speaking to her, I couldn’t help but treat her with more sympathy. Although I knew I began to treat her differently, I struggled to find the right way to go about it. For a while, I was in denial that my mom could disappear from my life before I became the man I hoped to be. I found myself persistently avoiding any conversation dealing with her condition. Ultimately, I realized that I was doing it because it was ingrained in my head that my mom’s disease would soon disappear.
My mom’s condition had its negative effects on me but shockingly I can also attribute it to my personal growth. During my first year of college, I came into the school with a purpose of finding myself, to grow as a man, and utilize higher education as an opportunity to find my niche in this society. While such a disease like ALS could distract me from reaching my full potential, it has helped guide my development. Referring to my avoidance of talking about her condition, I was constantly searching for the reason why. It allowed me to put myself in others’ shoes when needed. This, in turn, showed me that acceptance instead of evasion was the answer. Soon after discovering about her condition, I knew I had to grow up in many ways whatever that may be. This realization helped me mature in various aspects of my personal identity. Unfortunately, my sister could not finish college which for a while troubled my parents. Seeing their sadness only pushed me to make that happen because one of her few wishes was to see my sister and I graduate. My mom’s selflessness has motivated me to unlock my true potential and keep chasing my goals.

All in all, discovering that my mom has ALS has undoubtedly changed my life by showing me the harsh reality of having someone close to you with a life-threatening condition. Despite my mom’s disease, my acceptance of this misfortune constantly drives me to discover my true self and pursue my aspiration of becoming an engineer.