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Describe how your personal goals, challenges or commitments exemplify or are inspired by Michael Rothberg's legacy.

Her blood was pumping in a unique way this day: racing through her body-head to her sore, tired feet; through her enormous heart; through her mind as a giant wave of satisfaction; to the smile on her face; and finally, to the developing life within her. Pregnant with me, my mother walked all twenty miles to complete the Walk for Hunger, an annual event to raise money to feed the thousands of hungry families and communities in Massachusetts. The blood that pumped through my developing being on that day flows through me now, and I'd like to think that the satisfaction of giving is in my blood.... literally. Ever since I could walk, I have put my feet into action to stroll alongside my family and the thousands of other volunteers. My mother's first walk became my lifetime of significance.

On May 2, 2005 the alarm beckons at five thirty a.m. and I have already laid out a comfortable walking outfit the night before. A backpack with a change of socks, CD player, music assortment and snack is already in the car and in a blur of an hour, I find myself ready to go. My family and I drive into Boston to begin the walk early, to get a head start against the enormous crowds to come. The clouds are thick and the air is muggy, but it's hard to notice through the excited welcoming balloons at registration. It's seven a.m. and my mother, father and I start walking. Rain is torrential by nine thirty and people are creating ways to stay dry- wearing trash bags, giving others ponchos, buying umbrellas and stopping under canopied areas.

Thirty five thousand walkers trekked through hours of downpour with smiles on their faces. At noon, my cell phone rings and my sister wants to join the rainy festivities. My mother and I, now ahead of my father, wait for her under an awning with a few other walkers. A man offers us his poncho. Hundreds of others charge by the awning saying hello and waving as they pass. I am only walking with my family, but there are thousands of other walkers who feel like family too. I want to be every one of them: I want to be the little girl in the raincoat who can't wait to tell her friends she walked twenty miles. I want to be the old woman who has walked for a cause for twenty-three years. I want to be the man who is walking by himself having raised three thousand dollars. My father has caught up by now and has made a few friends along the way. Now, my sister arrives, drenched, and the same nice man under the awning offers her a poncho.

Every year The Project Bread posts signs of encouragement and facts on hunger. I read the signs posted everywhere we pass. "240,000 children (15 %) live in poverty in Massachusetts." "600,000 people lived below the poverty level in 2002. This is 9.5 % of the population of Massachusetts." Here we are, walking in the rain and I cannot think of another thing I'd rather be doing. I have nothing to ask for, but there are millions of starving people in the world who walk to find food, and live on the streets in the rain for days at a time. My heart is racing. We laugh and bond. It rains most of the day and towards the finish line the sun begins to come out. My body feels as though it has forgotten how to stand, but my mind tells me I should walk another twenty miles.

My blood is pumping in a unique way this day: racing through my body-head to my sore, tired feet; through my heart; through my mind as a giant wave of satisfaction and to the smile on my face. My personal goal is only to make an impact, no matter how small it may be on the world because thanks to people like my mother and people like Michael, I have learned that sometimes the most significant experiences of our lives are the experiences that are significant to the lives of others.

How have acts of terrorism around the world affected your life and your outlook on the future?

As unfortunate as it is that tragedies must occur as a result of mankind's flaw of ignorance, such as terrorism, it is during these times when we see man's finest trait: the ability to do good.

I remember September 11th as a day of chaotic stupor. I was in school and the news of the World Trade Center being hit was announced via intercom. I suppose, being only in eighth grade, I could not at that point in time fathom the extremity of the act. It was not until I returned home on that day that I truly saw the tragedy in full form.

My mother had been at work, in Boston, where she works for the Social Security Administration. She had heard the report on the radio and spread the word to her employees, most of whom had already heard themselves. Her and her co-workers had been told to evacuate, as government employees in a major city, they were wanted out of the city as soon as possible. She had heard that South Station was being closed, when in fact there had been added trains. There were no trains directly into Sharon and so my mother took a train into Canton, where she had asked my grandmother to pick her up. It was when my grandmother arrived that my mother was informed of the real tragedy herself. Michael Rothberg worked in the Towers and my mom had known him for years. She knew how he hired his friends in the World Trade Center and how there was a good possibility that they could not all make it to safety. My grandmother told my mother how Iris and Jay Rothberg were in Florida and had been attempting to reach Michael with no answer and how they were planning to go to New York. When I returned home on September 11th, I still had difficulty understanding the intense news. My mother was clearly upset and all the TVs were on the news. She explained to me about Michael, how they were friends and how there are some people in the world-innocent people- who sometimes involuntarily sacrifice themselves to men who do not possess that innocence and good.

Michael believed in helping out others and he believed in service to those who needed it. It is sad, but true that in times of tragedy we see this will to help others, which Michael had everyday. The hijackers and other terrorists are men that never will understand putting others before themselves, taking lives into consideration or putting good before evil and violence. Part of the tragedy is not only the hundreds of innocent lives lost-lives of people like Michael, but also that there is some potential in man to commit such a repulsive act.

I recall watching the hundreds of people in streets picking each other up off the ground, people helping people reach safety, firefighters running back into the burning buildings, knowing it could collapse at any second, citizens on the streets offering all they had to the situation. Months later there are still stories of workers in the building who sacrificed their own lives to save strangers they had never met. This is the beauty of mankind. In a devastating time, people somehow find the strength to put ignorance behind and put others first. These sacrifices are what will someday make up for the flaw.

The terrorist act of September 11th affected my life because it reminded me to have hope. The tragedy provides hope for mankind and that there are people who will always come together and sacrifice themselves for good. I will not let those who cannot see good prevent me from achieving it. When I think of the terrorist acts of September 11th, I will always think of Michael and remember to put others before myself as he had done and as he would want others to do.