

## **OOM5 EPISODE 3:**

### **GENERATIONS OF INSPIRATION: TEENS REFLECT ON THE POWER OF FAMILY**

[theme song]

**EASON:** From PBS News Student Reporting Labs

**EVELYN:** And WETA

**EASON:** This is *On Our Minds*

**EVELYN:** With Evelyn

**EASON:** And Eason

**EVELYN:** A podcast made by teens, for teens

**EASON:** telling stories about who inspires us!

[theme music fades]

**EASON:** Hey everyone!

**EVELYN:** Hey guys!

**EASON:** So today we're going to be talking about family, and I think family is a big part of what shapes our identities and our values growing up.

**EVELYN:** Yeah, I totally agree with that. I think since we have so many student stories today, let's just dive straight into it.

**EASON:** And our first story comes from Ava. She's a senior from Black River Falls, Wisconsin, and the person who inspires her is her dad. Here's Ava!

[AVA DRUMMING]

**AVA:** Cool, right? That's me. I've had an obsession with music since day one. I blame my dad for most of it. His career as a drummer was the inspiration for me to begin my own adventure in music. I remember my first drumset like it was yesterday. My parents got me a little pink drumkit when I was about 4 or 5.

[AVA AS A KID DRUMMING]

And I wailed on it day and night, trying to mimic the way my dad played. I never really got to ask my dad what made him start his career, so I sat down on a call with him to get the answers to my biggest question of all: how did he do it?

**AVA:** I've never asked you this stuff before.

**KEIO:** Well, you know, it's like we don't really talk about that. You know, it's like we talk about stuff. It's usually like, you know, dad daughter stuff or you and mom stuff, or you and, you know.

**AVA:** We have a lot of catching up.

**KEIO:** You know, it's it's interesting because, music is music is a very, very tough career to get into. And a lot of musicians are very, very, skeptical about asking when they're kids is they want to do music. You're like, man, like you, you know, you know what it was like for me and you still want to do this. That's cool. And realize that, you know, it's just not it's not easy. You know, even as a 44 year old man, crazy to say that, by the way.

**AVA:** My dad, Keio Stroud, is a drummer based in Nashville, Tennessee, and it's safe to say he's made his dream come true. Here is John Rich introducing my dad in concert, in his own special way.

[JOHN RICH INTRODUCING KEIO ON STAGE]

My dad was always apprehensive about asking me if i wanted to do music because of his experience.

**KEIO:** I got into music as a child, and my dad played music, and he was in a top 40 band. He also had, like, a gospel quartet. And I used to be like, this really weird little kid because my dad play guitar, and I want to be like my dad.

**KEIO:** So my dad gave me a guitar, and I used to, like, be on stage with them playing this guitar.

**KEIO:** I would basically be an air playing guitar, which is very embarrassing now. But, you know, that was my love for music. And, you know, obviously my, my mom and dad are not together. And so when my dad, on the weekends, my dad would go to the music store on the weekends and he'd buy me a pair of drumsticks, and they let me play around the drums.

**KEIO:** And then we would listen to music and my favorite song, especially when he would take me to school, was a song by The Gap Band called Early in the Morning. And it started with a rooster crowing,

[GAP BAND: EARLY IN THE MORNING]

cock a doodle doo doo doo black. You know it. Help me like, jam out and do it.

**AVA:** I think we all have our own favorite song that we hope plays in the car. Something that we play when we want to get something done. Something that inspires us.

**KEIO:** My dad played in this top 40 band, called the Common People Band. And those guys are very, very nice and very supportive of my music stuff. When I was about, I don't know, 13 or so, I realized that I wanted to spend more time with my dad. The incentive to get good was I wanted to be good enough to play drumset in that band, so I can spend more time with my dad.

**KEIO:** That was a whole thing that did it.

**AVA:** It was then that I realized that me and my dad aren't that different. I started to play music because I wanted to be close with him. He began his career with a last minute gig and moved away from home. But the road to success was rough.

**KEIO:** There's only two gigs I've gotten from three gigs I've gotten from auditions. One was Rodney, two was National Star, which I got fired from Big Town. I got fired from that one. I actually got fired from that one. And you were a baby. I called you, and I apologize to you for getting fired.

**AVA:** But he pushed through, working hard, eventually playing for big names like Big and Rich, Keb Mo and many more. Mere he is covering "The Lord will Make a Way" by Al Green.

[KEIO DRUMMING TO AL GREEN]

**KEIO:** I knew what I wanted to do for a living when I was five years old, which is which is rare. You know what I mean? That means that I, I eat, sleep, and breathe music. But, you know, but it, the the ideal of it, you know, is that you whatever you want to do, you have to engulf yourself into it.

**AVA:** I think the biggest takeaway from his story is that no matter how hard it gets, never give up. Because you never know when success is right around the corner.

**AVA:** Well, that's kind of all I really had to ask. Anything you want to add at all?

**KEIO:** I love you.

**AVA:** I love you too.

[laughter]

**EVELYN:** Imagine having a famous drummer as a dad. That's so cool. I'd be telling everyone.

**EASON:** Yeah, I think it's honestly super nice to have a nice positive role model like that in your life. And I think I've had somewhat of a similar experience with my dad. I mean, he's no professional drummer, but he shared his passion for photography with me. And that's kind of what inspired me to do all the things I'm doing with photography, cameras, and all that kind of stuff.

**EVELYN:** Yeah, I totally agree. I think sometimes as children, we idolize our parents and we try to share their hobbies to have a better bond with them. For example, with my mom, she used to really like to bake. She would bake these like really cute like bear shaped cakes or stuff like that. And then now I'm trying to really get into baking because sometimes when I need help, I can be like, hey, mom, can you help me? And she'll totally be glad to help. And it's like a really good bonding experience.

**EASON:** Yeah, I agree. I think having those kind of things you share between you and your family is really helpful for building that connection, especially for someone like Ava who's separated by distance from her dad. And I think you brought up a great point. Like you said, baking food is a great way to build connections. It's a big part of your culture and who you are.

**EVELYN:** Yep, and that's also true for the next student who made their story, which comes from Priscilla and she's from Granite Bay, California, and her mom inspires her. So take a listen.

[music]

**PRISCILLA:** My family is originally from Afghanistan. Growing up, I have had the unique experience of balancing both Western and my ethnic Afghan culture, with my mom inspiring me to embrace my heritage. To give you a little feel of what home sounds like—

**PRISCILLA:** Hi, Mom.

**MOM:** Hi.

**PRISCILLA:** Why was it important for you to raise me knowing my cultural background and heritage?

**MOM:** I wanted you to always feel connected to your roots, even while growing up in America. It is easy to forget where you come from when we are surrounded

by a different environment, but it is our traditions, our language, and our values that keep our identity strong. As I have gotten older, I have fallen more in love with my culture, and I really wanted to give you a strong foundation to navigate as you transition into your life.

**PRISCILLA:** I am so grateful for that. I realize how much of a big part of me identifies with being Afghan. I even crave our ethnic foods like bolani and kabob on a weekly basis. I like to interchange our English words with Dari words, especially when I am speaking English to help further explain points. I also love when we celebrate holidays like Nowruz and Eid because they symbolize how our family gets together with our loved ones.

**PRISCILLA:** I remember when we were little, you always made sure that I greeted everyone properly. Can you share why that was so important to you?

**MOM:** In Afghan culture, respect and hospitality are everything. Greeting someone properly is a way of showing kindness and recognizing their presence. I wanted you to understand that a simple hello can make people feel valued and welcomed, and more importantly, feel seen. Proper salutations are a core value for us.

**PRISCILLA:** I totally agree with you. Even when I am at school, most students do not even acknowledge our teachers or say hi to them. But I know deep down that everyone appreciates and loves to be acknowledged.

**PRISCILLA:** I also remember that you and Dad always made sure we embraced Afghan food at home. We rarely even ate Western food unless we went out. Why was that so important to you both?

**MOM:** Well, we wanted you to love our food the way we did. Afghan food carries memories of family gatherings, celebrations, and our childhood. The flavors, the spices, and the way we prepare our meals all have a deep meaning. Food is not just something we eat—it is a connection to our past and to our people.

**PRISCILLA:** I love Afghan food. I love going to Afghan restaurants, and I love seeing modern fusion takes on our traditional dishes, especially kolcha, which is an Afghan cookie. I remember my first time eating a kolcha—I thought it was the best dessert ever. It is only made of four ingredients: flour, sugar, salt, and oil. Almost all of the cells in my body crave this ancestral treat, and I have been hooked ever since.

**MOM:** Yeah, that is because food has the power to bring people together. It is a way to keep our heritage alive, even as we grow in a new culture.

**PRISCILLA:** I have honestly never fully appreciated these things when I was younger, but now I see how much they shaped me. Thank you, Mom, for making sure I have held on to my roots. It is definitely something I will always carry forward.

**MOM:** That makes me really happy to hear. No matter where life takes you, Priscilla, you will always have a piece of your culture with you.

**PRISCILLA:** Thank you, Mom.

**MOM:** Thank you.

**EVELYN:** I honestly thought that was such a sweet dynamic between Priscilla and her mom, like they were really supportive of each other throughout the whole thing.

**EASON:** And I think it was so cool how her mom was so supportive of her like, still being in touch with her culture.

**EVELYN:** Mmm.

**EASON:** Something that, you know, the listeners might not know is that we both immigrated here.

**EVELYN:** Yeah, at the same age, too.

**EASON:** Yeah, in 2016 when we were 10 and I think, you know, thinking of staying in touch with our culture is definitely like a big part of what's on my mind every time I think about you know my heritage.

**EVELYN:** That's true. I used to think that it wasn't that important for me to stay in touch with my heritage until I think Recently, I remember my mom was really like persistent on us having to celebrate Chinese New Year Like no matter what and she was like if you go to college you have to celebrate it And I used not understand why until this story really made me realize that like it's so important to connect with your roots

**EASON:** Yeah, I remember when I first moved here, I missed a lot of the authentic Chinese food I had back home. But as time went on, my mom started to learn to make

more dishes, like the ones that I really like, like Peking duck and Tanghulu. And I think it's super important for me to have that, you know, piece of home with me.

**EVELYN:** Wow, I think your mom has to share her Tanghulu recipe. Yeah, I agree with that. And for some of us, it's our parents that unconditionally support us, but for others, it's a sibling bond that provides encouragement, like our friend Olivia, who started an art club with her sibling based on their shared passion for art.

**EASON:** Yeah, that's similar to our last story. Denver and Dylan are siblings and have a great relationship. Denver is home schooled in Orlando, Florida, and Dylan goes to Emerson College in Boston. They talk on the phone all the time.

[music]

**DENVER:** Hi, I'm Denver Humphrey. I'm 16.

**DYLAN:** Hello, everyone. My name is Dylan Keith Humphrey.

**DENVER:** To preface, I think Dylan and I were homeschooled together, we played tennis together, we performed together.

**DYLAN:** The best part of being siblings is having almost like a forever teammate. Giving each other the space to fall, to climb. And we're not twins. We're not twins. I've led you, you've led me. People might mistake it for twin telepathy when it's just giving a piece of your own consciousness to this one person because you care deeply about them.

**DENVER:** All of our major life experiences, our winning tennis tournaments or acting on set, all of these major life experiences have always been together. And I feel like when you've always had those together, it's like, at this point, this person is just gonna rock with me and I'm gonna rock with them. So it's like, you're never really doing, you're not doing it alone.

**DYLAN:** If there was one thing I could say to you, like, you can do it. Like, there's not much you couldn't do. I think the world's your oyster, and I really think you're unstoppable.

**DENVER:** Yeah, oh that's so sweet [laughter] so i feel like i see our relationship evolving into something that is very fluid.

**DYLAN:** It truly comes down to being there for the other. It could have gone anywhere. It could have gone anywhere. And it's literally, Come to this place where we're both good and and we're both happy and there's a lot of peace.

**DENVER:** Peace!

**DYLAN:** I think the one thing that we'll always have you know in this very turbulent time in society is each other

[music fades]

**EVELYN:** They have such a comfortable dynamic with each other and you can just tell that they've been really close.

**EVELYN:** Yeah, it honestly kind of reminds me of my cousin. I don't have an immediate sibling, but my cousin who lives in China and I are really, really close. But the funny thing is, whenever I go back to China, I'm not confident in my Chinese, but she's introverted. So what we end up doing is we just stand in silence next to each other and like not talk to anyone in public but we're just like on the same wavelength like communicating like via brain waves and just standing there.

**EVELYN:** Next week, we have another author episode. This one with Viet Thanh Nguyen. He's a novelist. He has written a number of books, including *The Sympathizer*. His work explores culture identity.

**EVELYN:** Before we go, we have another podcast we recommend you check out...

[Ad for Speaking of Psychology podcast]

**EVELYN:** Today's segments were produced by Ava, Priscilla, Denver, and Dylan

**EVELYN:** Lead Podcast Producer Briget Ganske produced this episode with editing and mixing by Wyatt Mayes, and help from Genesis Magpayo

**Eason:** Ryan Janes is our camera and audio operator.

**EVELYN:** Approval and oversight by Editorial Director Marie Cusick and Executive Producer Leah Clapman.

**EVELYN:** Theme music by Isaiah Brown. Additional music from Blue Dot Sessions. And special thanks to Keio Stroud for providing music for Ava's story.



**EVELYN:** See you next week!