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Jordan's Story: Persistence in Motion

> *"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."*
>
> —Robert Collier

Jordan White always walked fast. Not because she was in a hurry, but because she was determined—and determination has a pace all its own.

Born into a working-class family and raised by her mother in a modest duplex just outside Tulsa, Jordan learned early that life wouldn't hand her anything. Her mom worked long hours at a local grocery chain, often did without so Jordan could have what she needed. From the cracked linoleum floors to the late nights spent studying by a dim table lamp, every detail of Jordan's early life was laced with grit.

"My family means everything. I watched my mom work nonstop to keep us going, and I've always felt like doing well was my way of showing her it mattered. That I saw her."

By high school, Jordan had mapped out her own future. She enrolled in every honors course available and stayed late to get help with calculus from a teacher who saw her spark. After school, she worked part-time at a box chain store to help pay for tuition at the local community college she planned to attend. When her peers were going to football games and dances, Jordan was balancing ledgers and reading about macroeconomics. It wasn't glamorous, but it was hers.

Her first two years at community college were lessons in endurance. She carried full course loads, worked part-time, and still maintained a near-4.0 GPA—an achievement she and her mother took deep pride in. Being accepted to a state university 160 miles away, felt like a door opening to a life she'd only ever imagined. She moved in with her aunt outside Norman, Oklahoma to save money and made use of every academic scholarship she could find. Summers weren't for rest—they were for more classes. And between lectures and late-night study sessions, Jordan volunteered at local nonprofits and joined professional organizations.

"I clicked with accounting. Numbers had a way of making sense when life didn't. Big problems, small ones—I liked figuring them out. Honestly, I liked the challenge."

But here's where the story turns: Jordan didn't just want to escape poverty—she wanted to redesign the systems that kept people in it. By her senior year, she had built a reputation as someone who could bring order to chaos. Interning for a small nonprofit, she noticed inefficiencies in their bookkeeping and built a new accounting workflow that cut processing time in half. They offered her a job before she even graduated. She continued to pursue bigger career opportunities and now, 27, Jordan is the office manager and lead accountant at a growing organization.

She's known as "The Fixer"—the one who sees both the numbers and the people behind them. She listens closely, speaks carefully, and creates systems that empower others to thrive. But even now, she admits it's not always easy.

"Sometimes I still struggle with imposter syndrome. There are moments when I walk into a boardroom or face a complex financial challenge and wonder if I belong. But then I remember everything I've overcome—and I push through."

The same table lamp that once lit her textbooks now sits on her desk at work, a quiet reminder of how far she's come—and why she chooses to lift others as she climbs.

Recently, Jordan was invited to speak at a local career tech serving primarily rural, underserved students. The room was packed with teenagers and young adults—a quiet buzz of energy in the air. A few students skimmed notebooks, others briefly glanced up from their phones as Jordan stepped to the podium. The usual hum of side chatter softened as her first words landed. Her calm, steady voice filled the room as she shared not only her career path but the uphill road that led her there.

She spoke of long nights working after class, of a mother's quiet strength, and of the table lamp that lit her books while the rest of the house slept. It was more than a speech—it was a testimony.

They asked thoughtful questions and leaned in with genuine interest. After the event, a young woman approached her with specific questions about navigating college while working. Jordan recognized a spark in her—the same determination she once carried—and offered to stay in touch. What started as a brief conversation turned into an ongoing mentorship, as Jordan now helps guide the student through decisions about classes, internships, and long-term goals.

"Sometimes all someone needs is to know it's possible. If I can be that proof for even one person, it's worth it."

Because storytelling, at its core, is about connection. When Jordan shares her journey—with new interns, young professionals, or donors who want to understand the

mission—she isn't just recounting facts. She's offering a mirror: proof that resilience, faith, and hard work still matter.

In a world of metrics and marketing, her story reminds us why human-centered storytelling is vital. It inspires loyalty, creates trust, and bridges the gap between what an organization does and why it matters. Jordan's life didn't unfold by accident—it was built with intention. And now, with every story told about her, she builds something else: belief.

Belief that success can come from struggle.

Belief that systems can be improved.

Belief that everyone's story is worth telling.

About the Writer

I'm Angie Thompson—a fundraising strategist, storyteller, and consultant who believes words and images can spark transformation. For over 40 years, I've partnered with nonprofits, small businesses, and purpose-driven individuals to help them move beyond generic messaging into clear, compelling communication that inspires action. My work as a writer, composer, and brand consultant has earned awards in film, television, and philanthropy, and continues to fuel my passion for stories that build connection and change lives.