

Everything Happens for a Reason

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Just a memoir of my childhood.

Published on
Booksie

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“Everything happens for a reason.” That’s what everyone says when no other words surface. “Don’t worry, it’ll be alright. God has a plan.” I never understood why people said “don’t worry.” Of course I was going to worry. I was going to cry, scream, question my faith, and deny everything that happened. I mean, what else is an eight year old sister supposed to do when her brother is going to die?

My mom came home one day from work, she was a teacher at an elementary school, and she told my sister and me the amazing news: she was pregnant. I wasn’t sure at first what it meant, but when my father explained to me that I would be a big sister, I was thrilled. Soon after, my mom’s stomach started to grow, and so did my excitement. I always liked playing with babies; they’re always so cheerful and curious. Of course, I never had to clean diapers or deal with crying; therefore, I thought they were the happiest little creatures. And after nine months, what seemed like a lifetime, my dad told us she was going into labor.

I’ll never forgive the hospital she went to; they didn’t let me in to see my mom give birth, they said I was too young. I know that it’s standard for all hospitals to enforce this, yet I remain stoic in my opinion. However, once my dad came out of the room, I knew it had happened-I knew he was born. I rushed into the hospital room boasting with excitement. There he was. Sound asleep in my mother’s arms. With me being as impatient as I am, I crawled onto her bed, over her stomach-which she didn’t appreciate given she had a C-section-and stared into my brother’s eyes, Kyle’s eyes. Immediately I felt attached to him, like we had a special bond that nobody else would share. He had the biggest blue/green eyes, jet black hair, and he was a big baby! I mean, huge. But he was perfect to me.

After we took him home, I spent every minute I could with him. I would rush home from school and just sit and play with him. I would rock him in his swing, play with his toys, and even watch my parents change his diapers. I never wanted to leave his side. I was told I was going to be a big sister, and I wanted to be the best one I could.

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My brother was three months old when my family and I decided to leave him with a babysitter while we ran some errands. That's when we got the call. I remember my dad answering his phone and rushing us all to the hospital, but I didn't know why until we arrived. We waited in that waiting room for hours and hours while my dad talked to a doctor. Finally, we were allowed to enter the room and see him. And there he was, hooked up to several tubes, just barely holding on. My dad explained to me how he rolled over in his sleep, onto his stomach, and stopped breathing. He explained to me how the babysitter found him, purple and struggling to breathe. He explained that if she hadn't found him at that time, Kyle would be dead. Yet, my dad wasn't mad at her. He said it wasn't her fault and it could've happened to anybody. He was very adamant about not making her a target for my family to put all the blame on. I can only imagine how difficult that had to be for him.

A couple weeks passed and Kyle remained in the hospital. They said he wasn't strong enough to breathe on his own and he needed to stay hooked up to all the horrifying machines. This didn't dampen our Christmas plans though; we actually created a tradition that year. We decided to open one present each that our parents chose for us on Christmas Eve. We wanted to open at least one, just in case Kyle wouldn't make it to Christmas morning. However, he did make it to Christmas morning, where we all opened our presents. Everything was going smoothly. Later, I found out that on Christmas Eve, my uncle broke into our house and stole all of our presents. How my dad didn't snap on him, I'll never understand. But that's just how my dad is; he stays calm when everyone else is a nervous wreck, a trait that I've learned from him.

Two days after Christmas is my dad's birthday, he soon learned that it would be the hardest birthday a parent would have to endure. The doctors told us that if Kyle were to survive, he would be hooked to machines, unable to speak, and partially paralyzed for the rest of his life. My mom and dad decided it would be more inhumane to keep him alive than it would be to let him go. On my dad's birthday, a day where life was given, another life was taken.

Just like that, I was no longer a big sister. How does a child understand that? How does an eight year old little girl who only wanted to be a big sibling comprehend that her little brother was gone? It took me years to get over his death. It took my family moving from Louisiana to New York for me to realize that there's more to life. I'll never forget Kyle, I never want to. But his death did so many good things for me. It taught me to love your family because they can be gone in the blink of an eye. He taught me to let go and not try to control things that I can't. Most importantly, because of him, I knew what I was supposed to do in my life. I knew that I wanted to be a special education teacher. It's as if in helping these kids who need it the most, I'm helping Kyle in a way I never could before.

Everything does happen for a reason. It's hard to see it when you're young and while it's happening. However, you notice it once you experience life. And I want to live my life in a way that makes

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Kyle proud.

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