

An Introduction to Overcoming Adversity and “I won’t quit!”

Remember from my second post that I spent 98% of my life hospitalized with asthma until the age of four. Now, recall Pop-Pop and the teddy bear in my Instagram posts.

To provide some backstory, Pop-Pop was my paternal grandfather. As it has been relayed to me many times, he and I were inseparable when we saw each other. During summertime, he would take me for ice-cream at Poppagouda’s (*not clear on the spelling*) and buy me two nickel cones, one for each hand. He bought me my teddy bear, the orange one wearing the blue bib donning a red apple. After all these years, it still squeaks. And should God bless me with a child, Pop-Pop gets passed down.

The last time I was hospitalized for my asthma, Pop-Pop was also hospitalized for his congestive heart failure. As Mom explained, he knew it was the end but also knew he wanted me to have that particular stuffed animal. So, one day, he gave my dad twenty dollars and told him to go to the store and buy me the bear which I have to this day.

A few days later (*the memory is still clear as day*), Dad came into my hospital room; he had the burden of telling me Pop-Pop had passed away. Fast forward for a moment: every time I struggled with something, Dad reminded me how strong and determined I was. He told me the story many times during my growing up. As it goes, when Dad told me Pop-Pop was gone, I was devastated and angry. Not only did I cry, but I made a decree: “Daddy, I’m never coming back to this hospital again because they take away people you love, and I don’t want to die.”

Not only was that the last time I was hospitalized, but it also set the tone for my life. Though I had many struggles throughout my life, whether with school, making friends, dating, jobs, or surviving traumas, I persisted. Even during times of great distress when I literally struggled to ‘breathe’ everyday, I chose to fight for myself and my life. This coupled with my faith and strong connection to prayer, literally saved my life.

I have come through the other side of my traumas, though it is always a work in progress. Now, I can breathe, and I no longer fall victim to others. I found my voice and now I’m using it to empower others.