

No One Ever Said It Would Be Easy

It would be nice to say that my first trial in life came with the death of my father. But that wouldn't be true. I've had a few trials and challenges in my life but have seemed to overcome them. My dad and mom divorced when I was about 11 years old. I lived with my mom until I was 15, and then moved with my dad to Wyoming to manage a ranch.

After I graduated from high school I went to work in the oil fields. The oil boom was big during the late 1970's and early 80's. I was working on an oil rig when I became entangled in the rotary table and just about lost my life. I ended up with a posterior dislocation of the right leg and an anterior dislocation of the left leg. I was told after 6 surgeries that I may never walk again and if I could walk it would be with stiff legs. I realized later the doctor knew me pretty well and figured out that I would accept the challenge. I never was one to take no for an answer.

I remember as if it was yesterday when I arrived at the hospital and saw my dad waiting as the ambulance approached. He was told that I had broken both legs. After cutting my clothes off and exposing the dislocations, my dad headed out the door on a fast walk. I later learn that he had gone outside to throw up. He just couldn't stand to see me lying there with the possibility that I may never walk again. He also told me that he would trade places with me if he could. I'm sure that most dads would say the same thing. After all isn't that what dads do?

I was in casts for 5 months and after they were removed I was sent home to rehabilitate on my own. I had started my rehabilitation long before the cast were removed. Lying in bed doing up to one hundred leg lifts per leg with casts on. After I arrived home I began an arduous work out and by November of the same year I was playing basketball.

My dad gave up ranching and acquired a job with the Forest Service. I think it was about 5 years later I also went to work for the Forest Service. At one point in our careers he became my immediate supervisor. As any son could tell you, it was harder to work for my dad than it was to work for anyone else. I was later forced to move out of my position and acquire another job so that there wasn't an appearance of favoritism.

Later on when my son started to rodeo in high school, my dad, my son, and I became quite the threesome. We traveled all over the State of Utah. He was with us every step of the way. We traveled to Las Vegas to the Professional Bull Rider world championships for several years. His love for rodeo never died.

After twenty years of service to the Forest Service he retired and took up gardening and making bird houses. He really never left his home to go anywhere after he retired. I could see a real change in his life. He became less and less active and stayed more and more in the house. The last couple of years he only went out of the house to go to the doctor. The last year of his life he really never got out of his bed other than to eat. I got to where I

really hated to go and see him, not because I didn't love him or care about him, but because he really didn't want anyone to see him this way. I never wanted to see him that way. I guess we both became selfish. His lungs had given out from smoking for 60 years and he was dependant on oxygen. It took everything he had just to get out of bed to eat. Several times he told me he was ready to die and didn't want to suffer any longer. He had made me promise him several years prior that I wasn't to let him suffer. The promise I made to him at the time was an easy one to make. Later I realized what he had asked of me and I couldn't hold up mind end of the promise. It was the night of high school graduation and my wife convinced me that we should go visit him. She must have had some kind of intuition because later that evening after the visit, I received a call that he had pasted away. To be real honest with you I never cried a tear. But felt as if a ton of weight was taken of from my shoulders.

I guess I would rather remember all of the good times we had together rather than dwell on the miserable days he had later in his life. I wish for no one to have to live in pain and suffering. I talked at his memorial and yes I came very close to breaking down, but held my own. He would have never wanted me to become a cry baby. Yes he's gone and yes I miss him very much. Not a day goes by that I don't think about him or the times we shared together.

I have to believe that trials in our lives only make us stronger. How are we to know the sweet if we never taste the bitter? For those of you, who will read this story, never underestimate the power of prayer. When you think your life has hit rock bottom, your heart is broken in two, and there's no way for it to mend. Pray about it and I promise you will receive comfort and answers, maybe not today or tomorrow, but sometime. Things happen for reasons and we don't always know why. Try to be an optimist rather than a pessimist. I believe when we have trials in our lives we should tell the story. I hear all the time "why me" I believe it's so you can tell the story. Trust me; there's always someone else in the world that has it worse than I do. I know it's because I could never accept some of the burdens that others are given. I also believe that we will never be challenge or tried with things we can't overcome. We are selected to endure those things that are the most challenging to us. That's why everyone's challenges in this life are different. I'm grateful that the challenges in my life have been minimal. After all, if you really think about it, there are worst things than dying. No one ever said it would be easy, it's only been said that it will be worth it.