



# Strength to Overcome Failure

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It seems that I have been battling obstacles my entire life – obstacles that seem to always set me up for failure. I feel like the biggest obstacle I had to overcome was the separation of my parents when I was three. With an over fifty percent divorce rate today, divorced parents do not appear to be an obstacle but when I was young, it was a hard. People always asking, “Where’s your mom?” or “Where’s your dad?”. Terms used like “broken home” made me feel like a failure and to this day, it still bothers me. It is something that I have come to understand and accept but it still hurts.

I lived with my father, grandparents and younger brother for the first half of my life in Indiana. I started school like all other kids my age and did my homework. My mother moved to Chicago with her parents and I rarely saw her due to her financial issues and drug problems. Needless to say, I struggled to succeed in school. In grade school, I was diagnosed ADD, put on medication and moved back a school grade. My brother was a year younger which didn’t make things any better for me. I refused to take the medication and to this day never have.

The rest of my grade school days were not the easiest days of my life. I still continued to struggle, and having my younger brother’s success held over my head didn’t help my self esteem. I was away missing school because of false illness and fighting with my brother and his friends. In the 6th grade my father re-married and now I had a step-brother and sister. At first, I didn’t want anything to do with the marriage but have only recently realized that it was a very good thing for all of us.

I continued to struggle until the 7th grade when I decided to move out with my mother when she moved to Indianapolis. I felt like anything was better than living in a place where I was al-

ways a failure. I started to get more one on one attention and help with school work. My grades started to improve through middle school and I made some friends. I started to learn how to control my anger and temper through music. Although I never learned how to play an instrument it was a way for me to get away and let it all out by relating the lyrics with my anger. When I moved to Indy, I also reconnected with my very good friend Chris Anderson. We went to kindergarten together and then he moved to Indy in the 6th grade.

The one obstacle that I had to overcome was the day I got the call about my brother doing drugs and underage drinking. I’m not talking about your normal pot use; I’m talking about cocaine and heroin. My mother became stressed which came down on me having to deal with the aftermath. He was in and out of detox wards along with my step-brother.

I started high school at North Central High School and started to hang out with Randy Badger my best friend still to this day. He helped me further channeling my anger by getting involved with a Bible group. However, new obstacles arose with my step-father’s alcoholism. He was in and out of jail and causing us to move a lot due to the lack of money from the bail and the damage that was done. We moved five times while I was in high school. The day he stopped drinking was the day the cops were called for a domestic battery. He went to jail and then to rehab the following day. He’s been clean to this day. To this day, I regret not making my mother join him in the rehab so that she could kick her drug habit as well.

All through high school, I managed to keep my mouth shut about my mother’s habit in fear that I would be without a roof over my head. I also managed to stay as busy as I could to stay out of the house and start thinking about how I wanted to live my life. So I joined JROTC to keep my self occupied. I learned valuable

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leadership and discipline traits. I also took advantage of joining the military to help pay for college. I was discharged for Asthma that no one knew about.

My junior year of high school I got involved in the J. Everett Light Career Center and took the veterinary assisting class. I went to the HOSA state competition and won 2nd place. I was unable to take the second year course my senior year but did manage to help out by being a student helper for the class. I applied for a scholarship to take the advanced year course as an adult student and received just that.

I graduated North Central High School in 2003 with a grade point average of 3.7 as apposed to the 0.7 that I came to Indy with. I never took advantage of my IEP for my ADD and never used any kind of illegal drugs.

Since I graduated, I used my career skills and acquired a job with the Indianapolis Humane Society. There I fine tuned all my skills and gained new ones along the way. I was there for one and a half years and became burned out from euthanasia. I also met my soon to be wife. After leaving the veterinary field, I turned to some good friends of the family for work. They hired me to build pools for Indianapolis Pool &

Spa. With them, I refined other handyman skills and gained an abundant amount of knowledge with electrical work. My mother and I have stopped talking because of my protest about her needing to get help with her addictions.

Last February I took a new job back in the Veterinary field and had to relearn everything. I assisted Dr. Jerry Risser and the staff of Fall Creek Veterinary Medical Center to open a brand new clinic in the Fishers area of Indy. The experience will always stay with me as something that I was a part of and had an opinion in what happened. Currently I have left Fall Creek Vet due to lack of hours and business and took a job at the J. Everett Light Career Center as a teacher aide for the Veterinary Assisting class.

Goals and things to come for the future include my upcoming wedding to my one and only true love. As well as helping the career center's veterinary program grow by becoming another teacher. My involvement with a program like HOSA really does make a difference in a person's life – my life is just one example.

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