

## Never give up

Tuesday, 25 November 2014

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I guess this is my story. It's been a long and dark road, so I think the first part of my story might not be very uplifting, but it ends on a positive note, so I hope that's ok.

Growing up I was a introverted middle child with two extraverted sisters, I struggled to understand social rules, and I developed anxiety pretty early because I never seemed to be able to behave like one was supposed to and I never understood what I did wrong. I believe I had my first panic attack when I was about 9. I never told anyone because I was so used to being overlooked at that point that it didn't occur to me that I could talk to someone about it. It was a very frightening experience at the time, because I had no idea what was happening, and it felt like I was dying. Over the years feelings continued to be something I didn't quite understand, and definetly not something I knew how to talk about, so I just kept it to myself. In the end it got to be too much, I had a mental breakdown and dropped out of high school.

It's at this point that I could have let my illness take over, my depression was a suffocating darkness, and I had extreme panic/anxiety, every day felt like my own personal hell. Maybe I should have gotten help years earlier, before it had gotten that bad, but I was obsessed with not being "weak". I still am to some extent. But after I had my breakdown I immediately got help, I talked to my doctor, got into therapy. It took time, it wasn't a short journey to try and figure myself out. I tried to finish high school the next year, but I was even worse mentally and dropped out again. The next few years were pretty dark, I self-medicated with alcohol to make the fear manageable. Two people viciously beat me up, one of which I thought was a friend but turned out to be the kind of person who solves conflict with violence. I really hated myself.

Â I'm sorry, this is pretty dark, I'm just trying to create a picture of where I came from, what I've been through, I'm not even covering half of it. I just want to show that that is where I was, and through it all I worked to get my high school diploma so that I could go to University, which had been my dream for as long as I knew you could do that. I like to say that my life has been a series of punches to the face, but I always get back up. Every mound of shit dumped in my path I've conquered. I'm in a very good place in my life now. I have self-worth, I'm studying at a University, I have my panic/anxiety mostly under control. Going from 15-30 anxiety-attacks and at least one panic-attack per week, to one panic-attack and maybe 15 anxiety-attacks this past year is such a huge difference. My depression shows up every once in a while, put it's very mild. My biggest problem right now is the PTSD I got from being assaulted, I still don't know how to deal with that. However I have no doubt that I'll best that too, because I am a survivor and I never give up.

Apologies for the lenght of my contribution to Survivor Stories.

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