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Anxiety Does Not Own Me

Anxiety is something I have had for most of my life. I would be watching television, but my heart rate would be skyrocketing. I would tell my momma that it felt like an elephant was sitting on my chest, and that I could not catch my breath. I later found out that I had anxiety. I had no idea how to deal with my mental companion in day to day life. He would show himself when I was alone in bed: making me scared of the quiet darkness of night. I did not know that many people dealt with anxiety, and that I was not the only one. Anxiety just became apart of my life, but it was not too severe until the year 2016, which was when I had to form my own system on how to put a stop to my anxious little friend. My biggest lesson was learning how to fight off this thing called anxiety.

2016 was one of the best, and worst, years of my life. I was dating the love of my life, Seth Hancock, and life was great. Seth was everything I had ever wanted in a man. He is six foot and one inch, he has dirty blonde hair, and soft, kind, blue eyes, and he was twenty years old when I met him. His smile lit up the room. I love him so much. I was working forty hours a week as a nanny for two toddlers, and then in the fall of that year I also started my first semester at Bakersfield College. I was living with my grandparents, Dennis and Greta, who were generous enough to let me live with them for free. My great grandma Kate also lived with us since she could not live by herself due to her frail heart being so weak. We took care of her. She barely remembered who I was, but we would still sit on the couch together and watch our favorite

television shows until late at night. Life was good. But like all good things, it did not last. Great grandma Kate's health started to fail her, and soon she was bedridden in our living room, waiting for the knock of death to come to our door. Never having dealt with death, her shallow and scary breaths would haunt me. I could tell she was slipping. One day after my english class, I got home to realize that my mother was there. My mom rarely visited since she was so busy. I still heard grandma Kate's breathing machine, so I figured all was normal. We ate dinner, but something was not right. My mother, Jessica, finally told me that grandma Kate had passed away. Death. There was death right in front of me. I sat there stunned. I loved my grandma Kate, even though she could be cruel sometimes. I prayed that her soul made it to heaven. Seth came over to console me, but instead of letting him help me, I pushed him away. My grief would not let people in. The stress of college while going through a death in the family was too much. But I continued to go on. Seth and I were having so many problems, and I am fairly certain that most of them were due to my little friend, anxiety. He tried to be patient with me, but I snapped. I broke up with him. It was the worst time of my life. I let anxiety get the best of me. I had no idea how to control it. All I knew was that it was controlling me. I was ruining people's lives around me daily. Throughout all of this, I developed a small eating disorder, and dropped to ninety-eight pounds. I could not go through this alone. I knew that I had pushed one of the best men I had ever known away, so with a piece of humble pie, I asked him if he would have me back. Loving. That is all Seth Hancock has ever been to me. God placed him in my life for a reason. He knew that I needed a companion through this crazy life. He accepted me with open arms. Literally. My dearest friend and kindest lover will always be there for me.

Towards the end of 2016, I knew that I needed to get healthy both mentally and physically. I was too prideful to go to therapy, and too hard headed to let anyone help me. So I

helped myself. I thought out a game plan on how to battle anxiety, and how to put my weight back on. The gym saved my life. I went in December of 2016 to sign up for a membership, and I started immediately. The personal trainers there made sure that I was eating enough calories a day to sustain my active body. The cool thing is, working out made me hungry. I had not felt truly hungry in months. I started to eat more. Slowly but surely, I gained pound after pound. I became super intrigued by health and fitness throughout this journey of mine. I learned that when I exercised, it helped expel all of the unused adrenaline from my body, which is what made my anxiety worse. I learned to form a management system so that when I do have anxiety, I know what to do, and I do not flip out on those I love. It was a long road of hard work, but so very worth it.

Learning to take care of myself is one of the biggest lessons that I have ever learned. I grew out of a weak, whiney, and lonely stage of my life, and grew into a confident and strong woman. Seth and I have been together for a few years now, and I have learned to let him help me when I struggle. He is as amazing as ever. I had to make a the decision to let people in, and to find the path towards healing. I realized that I needed a change in my life, and that I was spiraling towards becoming full blown anorexic, and very mentally unstable young woman. God gave me strength to get out of the depths of despair, and to rise into the light of his love. I was loved. I am loved. Anxiety comes and goes still, but I refuse to give it control over my life again. It is my enemy, and my body will not become its host. Through this journey of healing, I have found a love for fitness. I am currently working on becoming a certified personal trainer so that I can help others with their health journeys as well. I could look at that dark time in my life as completely useless, but I learned a lesson: persevere, and do not give up because hardships, including anxiety, are temporary.

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