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College Writing 1~Monday 2:20pm

### The Hospital - New Life - Directions Needed

Among the chapters in my life's story, the two weeks I spent in the hospital after a plague of devastating events undoubtedly changed the trajectory of my life. Prior to the hospital, the enormity of lies I believed about myself and my life had pilfered the hope out of my heart and filled it with bitterness. The people I needed to be seen by the most, treated me like they did not like what they saw. Eventually, I subscribed to a narrative that left me feeling justified in believing that what had occurred is the end of anything good happening in my life. I feared that God would not provide a life I would have wanted, and eventually I came to believe that He did not. At that time, a Christian therapist suggested that I move from "hostility to hospitality", and I could not have anticipated that I would end up in a hospital to learn how to do that.

When I entered the Behavior Center, I experienced the death of my ideas and the birthplace of God's compassion and purpose, but it did not look like anything I thought it would. I believed my life thus far was the result of answered prayers that I had envisioned for myself when I was younger, which was to provide genuine support for any lost soul. I thought my career as a celebrity makeup artist was a reward for the childhood pain I had experienced, and that the success of that career was for the purpose of enabling me with resources to pass on what I did not have when I was young. I believe that growing up with adversity qualified me for a measure of freedom and was the reason for the blessings I had received. I believed that the childhood trauma I endured came full circle. That was my whole testimony, that abuse and abandonment qualified me to uplift anyone who felt like a minority.

When a large chapter of my life was filled with losing those very blessings, I thought it was that I was being punished. In my mind, it was not supposed to be that way, especially after I had been working so hard to heal. I operated in a system that had more faith in fear than it did in God. I was behaving in a manner that I thought would protect me from further pain. When my philosophy failed, my demand for justice left me bitter when I felt God was not showing me any. I realized that is what the therapist meant when he said to move from “hostility to hospitality”. I was not grateful for what I felt entitled to, I was left stuck, suffering from all the judgements that said there is something wrong with me. A sting of betrayal and the awareness of who people genuinely were and not what I built them up to be in my mind. I had been well acquainted with pain and loss but this was different. This time I believed the circumstances were evidence there was something wrong with me or I was being punished. I felt that I did everything I thought would make me accepted and protected, instead I was rejected and empty. I was terrified that I felt my life was not worth living.

The hospital turned out to be a place where I would find freedom from the need to please, and freedom from freedom from people I had considered to be essential in my life. I was able to identify with those in the hospital who were in despair over the monstrosity of a life they did not wish to endure anymore. I noticed that we all trusted the lies of other people's judgments, and the lies that our circumstances and lives were unredeemable. The common theme was that we feared the future and hated the past. We all felt stuck in a life filled with pain that we all deemed unfairly heaped upon us, and left most of us demanding God's justice.

God strengthened my shattered spirit to encourage them and myself, that if we calculated our circumstances with just an ounce of hope in God, it would all be okay. It had to be, we all had survived something to be in the hospital. Some people had attempted to end their lives.

Others had substance abuse issues. Some people were like me, people who were in the hospital not out of weakness, but out of the severity of pain, the type of pain that brings you to the end of yourself or the end of your life.

I realized freedom would be attained only when I stopped worrying about what people or family thought of me, or my life circumstances. I was exhausted trying to prove myself. The real issue was I did not love myself. That led to a revelation about my own self-worth and how trauma has affected me. The time I spent in the hospital, relating to and helping others opened something new in me. I felt compassion from God like I had never experienced before. It enabled me to see from a perspective of love and forgiveness. Resentment faded, and mercy emerged in my heart. I felt the love of God. This chapter of my life ironically gave me the opportunity to encourage people in the Lord while at my lowest point to people at their lowest.

God allowed all the bad for my good, I am stronger today because of the pain I have endured yesterday. The pain will work together the way it should, and I will become all that God created me to be. My belief is that true freedom is for me. Adversity and suffering taught me lessons that I could not acquire anywhere else, and there will be people that will need to hear my testimony to reach into their similar situation and touch their soul. The hospital experience taught me that I had to pick up the pieces of what I thought could not be repaired in order to build something in the future that would not be able to be torn down.