Grief Journal

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I was so mad when I heard about the death of my mother Cecelia. It was a beautiful snowy morning, I was fast asleep, and I heard a knock on my window, it was my sister Lorna. She stopped by to let me know that my mother Cecelia had just passed away. I thought she might have stayed longer because the day before, I heard the news that she was admitted to the hospital. Mother visited New York every year, she told me that she was getting older and she did not want to fly any more. That year made it the third year that mother had not come to visit. I decided to go with my daughter to visit that same year in April. I told my other 3 siblings that resided in New York, and they too were planning to visit that same year in April 2008. I brought my daughter and I tickets. It is still very clear in my mind as though it was yesterday. We were all very excited. I shopped so much and I had many suitcases full of items to take to Trinidad for my visit. I told my mother I was coming in April and her answer was, "save your days for when I die." I was very hurt when she told me that, as though she knew that her time was near to leave us. The same year in March on a Saturday morning I received a call from my brother Evans, stating that my mother Cecelia was admitted to the hospital in a coma, and the doctors were waiting for her to regain consciousness to perform surgery because her appendix ruptured. It was on a Saturday in March 2008. I had Pioneer Club that day at church, and one of the sisters told me that I needed to go to Trinidad now if I wanted to see my mother alive because she might not make it. The next day my mother passed away.

When I heard the news that my mother Cecelia had passed away, I was very angry. I asked the Lord why He took my mother Cecelia. She was not a bad person, I loved her, and she was my hero. I spoke with my mother twice a week. My heart was so broken, even now when I remember or talk about her I cry. I had to change my ticket to go to Trinidad for the funeral, and my daughter and I went the following year to visit.

My siblings screamed and cried all day long and I could not cry at that time. That same year at Christmas, I was at work at my desk and the office had Christmas music and I started to cry so loud. I was so hurt. I was in denial that my mother Cecelia had gone home to be with the Lord. My heart was aching so badly. Even to this day I felt that she was the only person that truly loved me beside Jesus. As I write this paper I was crying because I sometimes long to go with her. I was so depressed, broken, and at times I felt defeated. It was so bad that at times when I was commuting by train to work, I wondered how I looked and if someone was looking at me. No one knew I was suffering in silence. There were times when I felt better but I continued to suffer. I do not know how I am still alive. I never taught about ending my life because I really trusted God and he healed me. If it was not for God on my side I would not be here today. I am married and have a daughter, and I had to cry out to God to stay strong for my daughter's sake. I wanted to show her a good example because I wanted her to be strong and have a good life.

I was depressed most of my life and no one knew it. Recently I started to share with my eldest sister, we developed a friendship and shared things together but that did not help much. One day I heard a Sermon at my church from a minister and she spoke about women in the bible such as Martha, Ruth, Mary and others. Somehow what she said really touched my heart. She said some women carry a lot of load and I listened carefully. She said, "The load you have been carrying for many years and beating on yourself, put it down at the feet of Jesus." That day was the day when I was set free, just like that. I felt different, released from my load and burdens that I carried for many years. Sometimes I tend to want to go back to that place of sadness but I recover quickly.

I lived in Brooklyn with my husband and daughter and we moved from one apartment to the next. My husband Sam and I decided to buy a house in Queens, New York. It is a very quiet

neighborhood. My work hours were 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM. I was working in Wall Street at the time. One day I was walking home from the bus stop, and I heard two young men walking up the block behind me. I crossed the street and one of the young men waited down the block and the other young man ran up behind me and told me to "hold it." I said, "What do you mean to hold it?" He said "hold it, if I do not see fifty or hundred dollar bills on the ground, I will blow your brain off." He was holding a gun to my head. I was so afraid; I began to pray and plead the Blood of Jesus. The young man repeated a second time, "if I do not see fifty or hundred, I will blow your brain out." He could not continue, he was afraid and began calling the other young man down the block. I started to get scared and open my bag to put the money on the ground. As I opened my bag, one of my neighbors came out to go into his car, and the young man ran away. My neighbor asked me if I was ok, and I told him no. A man held me at gunpoint and he ran away when he heard him. I had money in my bag to pay formy daughter's baby sitter. My daughter had been sick and could not attend school. Satan is a liar! I know this is true because the day when I had money in my bag was the day I was held up. I came home and called the police. I went into the police car and we drove around and found the two young men. I went to court and the judge dismissed the case because the young man said it was not him.

I did not realize that it had affected me because I went on with my life and my husband picked me up with his car down the block when I came off the bus. I started not to go out at night because I was very paranoid of the darkness. So when my friends Genevieve, and Madga asked me to go out at night I always said no if I had to travel home on the bus or train. Last year my friend Genevieve invited Madga and I to New Jersey to visit at her apartment. My husband Sam works in New Jersey. Madga and I traveled with Sam to my friend Genevieve's apartment. We were having a good time, walking on the boardwalk and window shopping. Madga and I had

to travel back to New York on the bus and train. It was now afternoon. I asked Madga and Genevieve what time we are going back to New York. My friend Madga said we are leaving at 9:00 PM. I started to get paranoid. We went to the bus terminal to buy our tickets to go back to New York. I started to speak very loudly, and stated that I want to leave at 4:00 pm because I have to travel home and it will be dark. They decided for us to leave at 4:00 PM.

Going back on the bus Madga told me I am very controlling and she kept repeating it over and over. I realized that the paranoia was really bad. I took the bus from New Jersey, and train and bus to get home, when I got off the final bus, I ran all the way up the block to my house.

Next day I contacted my friends and told them that I was held up at gunpoint, and I get paranoid at nights when I have to travel home on the bus and train. I apologize to my friends and told them I was so sorry. I went to the Lord and prayed and ask Him to show me my controlling behavior and take away this paranoid and fear from me. I almost lost my friends Madga and Genevieve for many years.

I went to Nyack College and I graduated. On the day of graduation I invited my sister Lorna and she told me that she had to attend her friend's graduation. Lorna's friend Dorothy and I graduated from Nyack College on the same day. My sister and I grew up together and we were always close. Her friend Dorothy graduated that same day and she started with Dorothy's family instead of attending my graduation. It was in the same room and she did not even come over and say congratulations. I felt very disappointed and did not know why she refused to attend my graduation.

My sister Lorna and I never separated from each other, when we migrated to America we lived together. My sister Lorna got married and then she moved into her own apartment. Lorna was divorced. We lived together in an apartment in Brooklyn. I was married and my husband

Sam and I were very young at that time and we decided to purchase a house. I asked my husband if my sister Lorna can buy the house with us and he agreed. The house has two apartments. Lorna lived upstairs and Sam and I lived downstairs. Things were going pretty Ok until Lorna got married. Things began to change; she stopped paying her part of the bills and started asking for her half of the property. Sam and I went to a lawyer and started the process to buy her half of the property and it fell through because Lorna did not want to continue with the process.

It was about 8 years since we had tried to pay off Lorna and we paid money for the appraisal and other things that we were asked to fix in the property. Sam and I received a letter in the mail to go to the Supreme Court in Queens. Mother Cecelia did not raise us to hate each other or take each other to court. We went to court and Lorna and her husband Bill did not like how the case went and they put the house in the court for auction without discussing it with us. Another two years went by and Sam and I received a letter to go to court. Sam and I went to court and Lorna did not like the outcome of the case. Lorna changed the fence, planted trees on the property, and I asked her why she did not inform Sam and I about the changes. All she said you will love it. Two years have now gone by and Sam and I received a letter that she wants to buy over our half of the property, or we can buy her half of the property. Sam and I purchased her half of the property. Sam and I spent most of the money to upgrade the property and she never paid us back the money even though when Sam and I fixed it Lorna, Sam and I signed the loan. Lorna never paid not even $1.00on the loan. The bank appraised the property and Lorna got her own appraiser and her appraiser did it for more money, before we closed we had to pay her the extra $10,000 to close or the deal will fall through. I just wanted to set the stage to say this, ever since that day I lost my sister because we are not the same friends anymore. I feel so broken because we grew up together and we were very close.

I was very sad last year because I was counting family and friends of people in my family that died. I was up to 25 and I went to my pastor and told him he prayed for me. I was very sad last year when I heard about my coworker Yaschen who died suddenly at 38 years old. I called her and left her a message the week prior. She always shared with me how she was very overwhelmed and she was going to resign from her job. I always comforted her when she related those feelings to me and gave her a word of encouragement. August 9th was my birthday and I woke up and was checking my phone for birthday wishes. I saw a picture of Yaschen rest in peace and her funeral service. I contacted my supervisor and she told me she did not sleep all night. It was a shock for everyone. I was so hurt; I asked God why Yaschen died. She was not sick. I started to blame myself did I speak with her enough. I heard that she had chest pains and on her way to the hospital she died. The week before her was a young man named David from my church. He was only 40 years old and had chest pain and on the way to the hospital he died. I started to cry out to God what is this Lord so many people are dying, I started to panic. I had the spirit of mourning for a time and season one after the next. I was blessed to know that she knew the Lord. Yaschen's mother spoke to her about accepting the Lord, and she had a dream one night about seeing Jesus in her dream, she went to the pastor of her mother's church during COVID and asked him to baptize her, and told him she accepted the Lord. The pastor said he did not want to do it but she insisted that he should baptize her and he did. My friend Avis' funeral was next. It was another friend Maurice then my sister in law. It was a sad year.