

Jeanette Palmer

My name is Jeanette. I had a cancerous brain tumor. I was diagnosed when I was 10 years old, in the year 1995. This event changed my life. It made me a stronger person. Through what happened to me my faith was strengthened. I was able to see how much and how many people cared for me. If it were not for me getting cancer my life would have probably turned out completely different.

In early 1995 I started to get sick. I would get huge headaches; they were equal to or even worse than migraines. When I got these headaches I also had blurred vision and I would throw-up. I missed many days of school and left early from many of them. I went to the doctor quite a few times and he didn't know exactly what was wrong. It was stressful to be so sick and not know why or what to do about it. Finally, my doctor told me to go get a CAT-scan. Through this test he was able to diagnose me properly. He told my family and I that I had a brain tumor. My parents were frightened, worried, and shocked. I, on the other hand, was in a strange state of mind. What happened didn't really have a big impact on me. I really didn't know what to do with my self so I tried to just continue my life as best I could.

I went to NYU and underwent surgery; I had kind, concerned, and patient doctors. I went through chemotherapy that made me sick and I started to lose my hair, which was really traumatic and bothered me a lot. During the chemotherapy I got Spinal Meningitis. They took me off the chemo and put me on radiation. The radiation wasn't that bad but it did make me sick at times; it messed up my skin, and made it look dirty. After I finished 7 weeks of radiation treatment they tried to put me back on chemo but they soon took me off because my body couldn't handle it.

This event forced me to trust and depend on other people more. For a while after the surgery I really couldn't walk at all. I had to depend on others and a wheelchair to get around. I also had to get some physical therapy. Through the whole time I was sick I had to depend on others and trust in God. I was shown through this experience how much people really cared. Family members and friends of the family visited often. My dad stayed with me on weekdays and my mom stayed with me on weekends. I got tons of get-well cards, notes, and stuffed animals. My grandmother or mother cooked food for me to eat in the hospital. I was shown all the love and care I needed.

This experience also strengthened my faith in God. All I could do is trust in Him and believe that everything would be alright. One thing that I realize now, much more than back then is that God really did see me through. He was there all the time. That was probably why I was in a “subconscious” state or in “another world” for a period of time. Matter of fact there is a poem that can be a good example of what happened. It talks about an instance when this person is talking to God. The person is remembering how their life had been. He says that all through the good times in life he has seen two sets of footprints, one was his and the other was God’s. The person then asks what happened through the bad times, where was God, why was there only one set of footprints, why did He abandon him? God responded by saying that he never abandoned him and that during the times that there was only one set of footprints it was because he was carrying him. It was like that for me because I was in another state of being, another world, or subconscious-ness. God was carrying me through what happened; I also had the power of prayer all around me. My parents, friends at school and church, all my parents friends, and the whole church was praying for me and wanting the best outcome. And, it worked, all that praying, believing, and some medical help worked. I’m OK now, yes I have some problems, but I’m OK. I praise God that I’m still alive.

This experience has strengthened my faith in God. It has shown me how many people really care. It has forced me to build up my self-esteem in order to survive. What happened also directed me to my major. In the “playroom” there was a wonderful woman who would do the arts and crafts with the kids that were there. Previous to this event I always enjoyed making things with my hands and doing arts and crafts. Because of this event at the hospital my interest in art was sparked. It was sparked so strongly that I am now considering a career in art. No matter what, I know that if what happened to me, had never happened I would be a completely different person.