

## REMOVING OBSTACLES

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One of the most memorable experiences I had following my brain surgery was making the decision to overcome this huge obstacle. It had been at least a week since the removal of the benign, walnut sized tumor on the right hemisphere of my brain, when I learned that, due to the loss of blood, I had experienced a stroke while on the operating table. The consequence of the stroke was weakness of the left side. Fortunately, my right hand is my dominant side; therefore, my writing skills are intact. But one never realizes the difficulty ahead when you are no longer ambidextrous. My walking was of a fast pace. Occasionally, my husband and I enjoyed walks. Of course, we would hold hands at the same time. John and I had only been married for two years at the time of my diagnosis and this news was frightening to us both.

As I lay in bed thinking about my life before this terrible tragedy, I began to feel sorry for myself and began to cry. Then, suddenly, I decided to get up and walk to the window to look outside. Scooting my bottom to the edge of the bed, I slowly and cautiously lowered my left leg to the floor. Then I lowered my right foot to the floor. But when I attempted to step away from the bed toward the window, I tumbled and fell to the floor. The fall reinforced the devastating realization of the degree of my limitations. Again, I began to cry and sob and continued to sob until a nursing assistant entered my room and assisted me back into bed.

After the nursing assistant left the room, I returned to indulge in reminiscing once again. The door opened and the floor nun, Abigail, entered. Sister Abigail apparently heard my cries through the wall vent next to my bed and decided to visit me. She was so compassionate, caring and comforting to me. It was Good Friday and Sister Abigail assisted me in receiving Holy Communion, prayed for me, and encouraged me to also pray. I did, and it was exactly what I needed to do as I felt so refreshed and renewed, feeling confident about my life. Now I found myself speaking aloud, "I do want to live. I do want to live." But mentally my thoughts arrived at this simple solution: to live I must actively participate in life and not give up, but welcome the opportunity to learn new ways of doing things. I had to keep active and productive.

My self-revelation that my life was not over, just different, was a direct response from Providence. And my Heavenly Father sent me an angel to rescue me from unnecessary pain and exhaustion, and that angel was Sister Abigail.

It is very important to make a special effort to remain positive and believe in yourself. It takes courage to realize that trauma is like an opponent which you must fight with God's help. Being positive in most respects reflects a winning attitude and life is for winners, so I live, love, laugh and worship!

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