

Everything Happens for a Reason

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I always tried never to let a situation get the best of me, no matter how awful it could possibly be. It was a cold, windy night in the beginning of December my eighth grade year. The smell of our dinner lingered in the family room as my sisters and I sat in silence on the couch while my parents stood in front of the TV. My sisters, Katie, Annie, Maggie, and I all had blank stares on our faces because we had no idea what our parents wanted to talk to us about. And then the words finally came out of my mother's mouth, "We are getting a divorce."

Just like that, those five words hit me like a bag of rocks. Almost as if it was acted out, at the same time, our jaws dropped as we shouted, "What? What do you mean a DIVORCE?"

Growing up in a family where you were either with your mom or dad, never both, can really affect a child's life in the long run. Whenever my family on my mom's side would get together for holidays, my dad would never come—no matter how hard my sisters and I would beg him. The answer was always, "No, I can't, I have to do something." The same went for family vacations. My dad didn't really come on many vacations with us, and it just wasn't the same without him.

Up until I was a junior in high school, I always thought my parents got a divorce because they fought too much; at least that's what they told my sisters and me. Once again, my parents had something important to tell us. Figuring that it was almost four years after their divorce and my dad was back in the picture, the only thing I could possibly think of was the renewal of my

parents' marriage.

Well, that dream went away really fast after I saw the expression on my dad's face; he looked terrified. At that moment, I found out my dad had a daughter with another woman. Her name is Mackenzie and at the time she was about three or four years old. This news brought us all to tears, including my dad.

At one point I was asking my dad questions about her, and then I thought to myself that I really didn't care. I still haven't made an effort to meet my half-sister, but maybe one day I will when I'm ready to. I can understand why my parents didn't tell my sisters and me the real reason at first. They kept it away from us for so long because my dad believed we would hate him and wouldn't talk to him anymore, and my mom didn't want my dad out of our lives. My mom forgave my dad for us.

Ever since I was born, I've always been a daddy's girl, literally! Growing up, my mom told so many stories of me always wanting to be in my dad's arms and always just wanting to be around him. My dad and I always had a special bond—I think because my dad and I have the same personality traits and are more alike. For example, my father and I would text each other when we were bored just to see what the other was doing. We would even send text messages like, "Want to hangout or go for lunch?" and I always went to my dad when I wanted to go shopping because I knew he would take me!

After finding out about the terrible news, I kind of turned on my dad. When I first found out, I didn't talk to my dad for three weeks, even when he would come over. It really hurt my dad because he said something to my mom how I hadn't talked to him, and ever since I feel horrible for shutting my dad out of my life for a short period of time.

My parents' divorce had a huge impact on my life because for a while things were

completely different and we weren't so much a family anymore; however, out of nowhere my dad was back in the picture.

Before, I used to just see my dad about every other weekend when my mom would drop me off at his house. My dad started coming around more, but it was before I found out about Mackenzie, so I never really understood why. My parents are still divorced, but it's almost like they aren't. I feel like my parents are married because they do pretty much everything together now. It's normal for my dad to just walk into my house whenever, come over for dinner, and go on vacations with us. I think being away from each other, and my mom being able to forgive him, really brought them a lot closer. I know my parents still love each other, and I am glad to see them happy again.

Looking back at my past, I wouldn't change it for the world. Even though there were some bumps in my life, it has definitely made me the strong person I am today. Living with a single parent who worked as much as she could, I had to take on the responsibility of helping out around the house, watching my sisters, and becoming more independent at such a young age. From this bump in my life, I have learned to think of others in situations like this and not just myself. I believe in the quote, "Everything happens for a reason," because if it wasn't for my dad having the affair, things could have potentially turned out differently and they could've had a divorce at an older age when it could have impacted me more. No matter how big or small something is, it can always have the biggest impact.