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Overcoming Adversity

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Imani Reid

Overcoming Adversity

Most people hear the word “adversity” and immediately imagine worst possible scenarios; at least that’s what I do. I hear about someone overcoming adversity and imagine a child who lost both parents at a young age and practically raised herself on the streets and struggled through school, never had a stable home, may have been abused, etc. and I have been very fortunate to have never faced such extreme obstacles in my life. However, everyone has their own story, and although I may not have struggled as harshly as others, I have still had to face some challenges along the way, most of which arose in my life over the past two years.

It started with my grandparents falling ill. They were the ones who took care of the entire family and suddenly one day they were both incapable of taking care of themselves. Since everyone else in the family had careers that they were tied to, I fell into the primary caregiver role; I centered my life on my grandparents, and in what little free time I did get, I turned my attention back to school, which I had been missing. Somehow I managed to get through that first semester of junior year high school with A’s and B’s, but second semester presented new challenges.

In February 2013, my grandfather passed away and I took it harder than I imagined. I missed at least a month of school after his passing; I even stopped caring for my grandmother for a while as I tried to gather myself back into a stable being. I got it together eventually, picked myself up and got back into my old routine. I went back to school and also continued caring for my grandmother, which did not seem to be any easier or less demanding now that she was only one person to worry about. Yet again, I managed to finish out junior year strong and I promised myself that senior year would be much better.

I held true to that word on senior year, which was much better and easier than the year before. I got back into school, my grandmother seemed to be doing well, and I had the time to go out with friends again and feel like a normal teenager. I got through senior year just fine, accepted my offer into Xavier, packed up and came to New Orleans with no fuss. It wasn't until winter break, when I got to be home for a month that things came crumbling down around me. My grandmother's condition had significantly worsened while I was gone, and she passed soon after I got back. We buried her the day before my birthday. I went through the same grieving process all over again and swore that my life was over. To make matters worse, I began having issues with my financial aid and was dropped from my classes as registration opened for school. By then I was set on staying home because I had no desire to come back and deal with those problems.

Luckily, I have an extremely supportive, extremely pushy family that refused to let me settle for failure. They prayed, gave me words of encouragement, and buttered me up with a lot of my favorite snacks, and managed to get me back on my feet just in time to start the spring semester. At the risk of sounding cliché I will say, looking back now I would not change a thing. Of course I miss my grandparents, but I learned and grew a lot from those experiences and have much further to go. As the saying goes, a minor setback is just a set up for a major comeback.