

LiveInspired

Hitting Rock Bottom and How to Keep Going

By *CHRISTINE KNAPP*

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I sit here, nearly two months after my son's brain surgery, and I'm just starting to process all that's happened. The morning of Alex's surgery, January 10, 2019, I was filled with mixed emotions. I was ready for my son to stop having seizures. The medications that we had tried were not working, and his best chance at a future was for a neurosurgeon to perform an operation to disconnect the portion of his brain that was seizing. I trusted God had led my husband and I to the right hospital with the right surgeon, but I was still scared. Handing my child over and not knowing if I would see him again was the hardest thing I have ever had to do.

I believe when you encounter rock bottom, you know. Sobbing on that hospital room floor, seconds after doctors laid my son on a stretcher and wheeled him away, I knew that's where I was. Rock bottom.

When you encounter crisis in your life, it's easy to feel blind sighted. You're disoriented, you're scared, but above all, you're hurting.

However, once you hit rock bottom there is nowhere to go but up.

Here are a few tips to help climb out of the pit:

Hold onto Hope

I named my blog "*Our Beautiful Hope*" for a reason. I believe hope carries us through life's hardest times. There may be bad news, but that is just be one doctor's opinion. I have switched doctors or therapists in the past who have made assumptions and placed my son into a "category" or "label" after one assessment. I need those who are treating my son to have hope for his future. I need them to believe he will be successful. I need everyone on our team to have hope and help my son continually achieve his goals and be the best Alex he can be. No one has a crystal ball, so don't let others predict your child's future yet – it's too soon.

Minimize the Extreme Mindset

Before Alex's diagnosis, I tended to look at things in black and white, or at least look at them on the extreme ends of the spectrum. Usually, my mind was thinking, "This outcome is going to be *really good* or *really bad*." Typically, however, the outcome falls somewhere in the middle. There will always be extreme cases but living with the extreme mindset can get us into trouble, especially if you're constantly thinking the worst-case scenario will happen to you. Ask yourself – what might be more likely to occur in this situation? What would the outcome look like if it falls somewhere in the middle?

Regroup

The word self-care gets tossed around so much these days, but honestly, I haven't had time for a massage or spa time or whatever else the internet deems important for me right now. My son just had brain surgery. Not only did we spend a great deal of time preparing for it, but there was a long list of things that needed to be addressed post-surgery, including multiple x-rays, CT scans, ER visits, therapies and doctor visits. In February alone, we had 29 appointments and therapies in 28 days! Regrouping to me meant getting the medical bills and paperwork organized and put away. It meant taking time to catch up with a friend at dinner and talk about my son's surgery to begin accepting it. It meant putting gas in my tank, food in my fridge, and taking a shower. Doing the simple things helped me feel a little normal again. I find once there is a little bit of

“normalcy” back in my life, I can breathe easier. I can regain some control. Can you do one thing today to help you regroup?

Find Your Outlet

If you’ve hit rock bottom, you may need to find an outlet to channel your feelings and begin to heal. This may mean reading, painting, journaling, seeing a therapist, taking a kickboxing class, finding a support group, or simply walking around your neighborhood in the evenings. Your outlet may look different than someone else’s, but it’s a good way to begin the process of accepting what’s happened and move forward.

Never forget, you matter in this process! You are constantly giving and pouring from the well, so just make sure you’re taking a little bit of time to fill the well back up occasionally. The life of a special needs’ parent can be tough at times, it can even break us and cause us to hit rock bottom, but the important thing is that we wake up fresh each day with a plan to tackle all the therapies and appointments with a positive mindset, hope for the future, and a renewed energy from regrouping and finding an outlet for healing.

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CHRISTINE KNAPP

Writer, blogger and digital marketing specialist, Christine is the mama of her amazing perinatal stroke survivor. Her “why” is to continue to provide support and make sure no parent ever feels alone on his/her journey, and she began writing to give hope to other parents of children with special needs. Her son continues to grow and thrive, and you can follow their story on her [blog, Our Beautiful Hope](#) .

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Original link to story:

<http://www.inspiredbydrive.com/liveinspired/2019/04/02/hitting-rock-bottom-and-how-to-keep-going/>