

Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents

TURNING PAIN INTO SUCCESS

I have never met my biological father. At the age of 3, my mother abandoned me at a local hospital. My relatives took care of me until their alcoholism and physical abuse caused me to be placed in foster care. At 16 years old, I was living in the homes of strangers who would open their doors and allow me to live with them while I finished high school. Then, when I was 17, my life changed: I shared my heart with a mentor who had allowed me to live at their house for 6 months. The words of wisdom they gave me were “We don’t know how you’re going to make your dreams come true, but you have so much hope so we believe you can make them come true.” I went on to college and began a successful career, including my own business. At 25 years old, I have my own home, my faith, and my dreams for a stable, healthy, and beautiful family.



Let me ask you this: Do you know what pain feels like? Yes, we all do. My pain may look different than yours, but both our pains are equally valid and equally traumatic. My pain looks like abandonment, neglect, and abuse by my family members who were addicted to drugs and alcohol and consequently caused me to be placed in foster care. The pain of people who had a seemingly stable home but watched their parents fight and argue, who attended the same school every year but experienced bullying and discrimination daily, or who lived at home until they were 18 but experienced lack of purpose, vision, and identity is equal to my pain.

The conclusion I have arrived at is that you will never be successful until you turn your pain into greatness and until you allow your pain to push you from where you are to where you want to be. Therefore, I have stopped running from my pain and have embraced it because the pain I experienced in my past is going to be a part of my prize, a part of my product, and a part of my process. I believe true success is a long-lasting marriage. I believe true success is financial peace. I believe true success is a life with a balance between work and family. I believe true success is consistent communication within your friendships and significant relationships. I believe true success is breaking the cycle by thinking differently.



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