

# The Day it all Changed

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

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Have you ever been in a position in life where all you can think is everything is about to change? A point in time that just about everyone has experienced where you know that after that exact moment or after a line of events taking place, that your life will be nothing like it was. It can be scary, exciting, thrilling, horrific, or any other feeling a human can possibly have. Maybe even more than one of these at a time. January 13, 2017 was my day for this moment. It was my day to wonder what was going to happen next. My time to realize that my entire life and everything that I have ever known and done was going to be different from this point on.

Basketball, Rodeo, hiking, fishing, hunting. These are my favorite things to do. Basketball was at the top of my list for seven years. I played basketball from fourth grade till eleventh grade. On this day, I was in my tenth grade year. A sophomore in high school in the process of moving up to the Junior Varsity girls' basketball team. On this day we were playing Artesia, our county rivals. We had played them a few weeks before in Artesia and now it was our turn to win here in Carlsbad. My team and I were set to do anything it took to win this game. There was no way we were going to lose on our court, or so we thought.

It was a close game up to the half. We went to the weight room and tried to come up with a way to take over this game and bring home a win. We came out ready to go at the beginning of the third quarter. It was Artesia's ball to start the half and our defense was strong. We had a full court press going. The point guard made a pass across half court and I went up for the steal. I caught the ball and came down landing on only my

right leg facing the sideline. My knee popped, I fell to the floor, and I knew life was changing.

As an athlete in a sport that involves a lot of cutting and jumping a common injury and worry is an ACL tear. That was the first thing that crossed my mind. I did what a lot of people call the ACL clutch, this is when you grab your leg, pull it to your chest, and scream because the pain is so bad. My trainer and another teammate came running and helped me off of the court. They took me to the weight room. The matts for the wrestling team were rolled up against the wall. They laid me down on them to examine me knee. My mom, stepdad, and three of my coaches accompanied me and my trainer. My mom held my hand as my trainer, to the best of his ability, tried to figure out what was wrong. I couldn't straighten it and could only bend it so far. Unable to answer the question we all had, we wrapped it with an ace bandage, I was given some crutches, and we all went into the gym to watch the rest of the game. I went home for the night and tried my best to get some rest but was unsuccessful. The next morning my mother and I went to see my trainer to try to get an answer as to what was going on. He did an ACL check and my entire knee just kind of moved. He knew exactly what was going on. We all did.

After two weeks, I went to see my doctor. After an MRI and some X-Rays, it was confirmed. We scheduled a date for surgery and waited for the day to come. I had never heard of a Cadaver (donor) tissue before until I was told I would be receiving one. February 11, 2015, I had my surgery. I had a long road ahead of me and I pushed myself to my limits every day with nothing on my mind other than getting back on that court and

I did just that. In October, I was running a drill with my trainer that involved cutting. I had gone to cut to my right and that's when it happened. My knee popped, I hit the ground, pulled my leg to my chest, and screamed in agony. It had happened again. Eight months later, two weeks before my doctor's appointment in which I was supposed to be cleared and I tore my ACL for a second time. This time would be different. I had a partial tear rather than a complete and decided to play on it. I spent months strengthening and in December I was able to get on the court and practice for the first time in almost a year.

January 5, 2016, I played in my first game. It was a home game and my coaches and trainers monitored carefully. The more I played the more you could see something wasn't right. I was repeatedly asked if I was sure of this and every time my answer was yes. My knee was unstable and it had given out on me multiple times and I would just push through it. I wasn't going to let anything stop me. March 11, 2016, I had my second knee surgery this time, my hamstring tendon was used to replace my ACL, My ALL (A smaller connective tissue) was replaced using a cadaver tendon and my medial meniscus was removed while my Lateral meniscus was repaired. It has been almost a year since I had my last surgery and issues still arise regularly. I go to Albuquerque every three months to decide our next step. I haven't been on a basketball court since February of 2016 and I'm not sure that I ever will again.

Two Cadaver tendons and two surgeries have helped me tremendously on this journey. Thanks to those who had the courage to become tissue donors, a full knee replacement at the age of seventeen has been postponed and possibly prevented. I can't say where I would be right now or what I would be doing if I hadn't of been put through

these obstacles. Change may be scary. No matter what, the way you feel when you are in that moment may not be the same feeling after the change is made. Change can be good and no matter what it is, it makes you who you are. Don't fear it, just let it happen. Keep your head up because we can all conquer any obstacle.