

# A Fall that Led to a Blessing

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Personal Essay

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OTAP Scholarship

12 February 2017

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Some people or maybe everyone is guilty of taking things for granted and not taking a few seconds out of their day to thank God for the little things he has given us. In this case, I happen to be one of those guilty people in which God opened up my eyes that it was too late of me to do anything about it. On this very day, September 19, 2016, my life changed forever. I have always had trouble with my knees but nothing ever severe until this day.

It was a usual day, nothing different, same routine; I was getting ready for basketball practice. It was towards the end of practice and my team was on defense. On defense, if you aren't on the person you are guarding then you are in what is called help. So my person, Hayley had the ball so I was guarding her then she passed the ball and ran to the other side. In that moment, I turned to help position; all of a sudden I heard and felt a pop in my right knee. I yelled and fell to the ground. It had to be the worst pain I have ever felt. I knew right then and there that it was my ACL (anterior cruciate ligament).

I was on the floor for the longest time thinking everything ended for me in that instant. My coach told me to get up but I just couldn't, the pain was unreal. The assistant coach carried me to her truck and we were on our way to the athletic trainer's room. Our school athletic trainer, Doc, tested out and pulled on my knee to have an idea of what was wrong. Sure enough, she whispered in my ear and said that it might be my ACL. I was sent home with crutches and a brace. I was emotional and didn't want to believe what happened.

Sleeping that night was the most uncomfortable position to sleep in. I had to lay face up on my back and with a pillow beneath my knee. I hardly got any sleep because so many things were running through my mind. All that was on my mind was, “This was my year of basketball, what I was waiting for and now it’s gone just like that.” The worst part was getting to school and hearing people say that it must be horrible to get hurt my senior year.

The next day, I was able to get in at the doctor’s office at Lubbock Sports Medicine. Walking into that place was depressing. Seeing people of all different ages with an injury really hurt my heart. It was a while until the doctor saw me and when the time came, he knew exactly what was wrong. He tested it out and he said that my knee was very loose and my ACL was surely torn. An ACL injury is no laughing matter, but sadly, it’s a pretty common injury. He mentioned different possibilities of repairing it and I chose the cadaver reconstruction. It would be the easiest, faster, and most efficient way for my knee to heal properly.

Surgery to reconstruct the ACL is done arthroscopically, which means that it is done with the use of a camera through small incisions made in the knee. In reconstructive ACL surgery, the patient’s damaged ACL is completely removed and replaced using the donor tissue (allograft) from a cadaver.

We discussed the recovery process and time period and I already had an idea because some of my teammates have gone through the same situation. Soon after surgery, I would need to attend physical therapy out at the hospital and with my school athletic trainer. The recovery time is between 6-9 months so I knew my basketball and track career was over. Soon after, we scheduled the surgery for October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Surgery day was here and I was beyond ready to get it over with to start the rehab process. The doctor said that the surgery went well with no complications. I went home and my friends surprised me with goodies and get well cards. Those kinds of things boosted my confidence up that I will be back even healthier and stronger. The next few days were pretty tough, I was in a lot of pain, but it was what I needed to get used to.

Rehab eventually started and it was the most difficult time of the day. I did many different stretches and exercises each day. Overtime, I can tell that I was improving everyday slowly. There were times I wanted to give up but I knew it wouldn't help me in any way and I would let myself down.

One day, I was on my bed looking at my knee thinking how I couldn't really see my scars anymore. It almost looked as if nothing was ever done to it. Then, I was wondering how amazing it is that I have someone else's tissue. This tissue saved my knee. I never realized how this one person can change many different lives just by making a commitment to being an organ donor. I truly believe that this is part of God's plan for me. He wanted me to go through this time of pain so I can understand that everyone has a purpose and to use it in a timely manner.

Since this day, I thank God for blessing me with this injury because without it, I would still be looking at life as if it wasn't a gift. I have learned to cherish what I have because not everyone has the chance to better themselves. My tissue donor will forever be in my heart and now I have made my decision to register as an organ donor. This tissue donation had an amazing impact on my life and I hope to impact someone else's life with a donation one day. I took my capabilities for granted in which I needed to look at them as blessings.