

Chapter One

The Odd Beginning

I was born in a town known as Fresno California, that is in the county of Fresno. Early life wasn't that easy of a thing. From the get go I had problems. Medical problems if you will, being born at the end of July with having an October due date... well you can imagine where it would lead to.

2 lbs and 10 ounces was my eventual weight at the hospital. The doctors had every right to be concerned over me. Here I was an early baby, premature as it were. They tried stopping me from entering this world so early, but well I suppose I was quite anxious to get down here.

Anxious and anxiety, such interesting words to describe how I ended up here. I've been known to have anxiety here and there over the course of my life... but I suppose we're getting ahead of ourselves now aren't we? Yes, that's what I thought.

I *should* spare you the details about my infancy...but what would the fun in that be? No, it all must be told from whatever I can remember. To remember such things, I'd say it's a blessing and a curse. Personally I'm glad I don't remember the details at all. I only know what I have been told by my parents. They were there... I was, well I was there but I was too tiny to remember anything. I doubt anyone remembers things from the moment they were born. Now that would be an interesting thing.

But no, this life came as it always did. I was born on the last day of July in the year 1979. Missing the entire seventies scene. I don't mind that, I've seen pictures... so trust me when I say I *really* don't mind that at all!

Being almost three months early...the doctors rushed me quickly into the NICU where they hooked me up to machines to ensure that I would make it...hopefully. Yeah they *hoped* I would make it.

See? Even at a young age I was giving my parents a run for their money. That wasn't very nice of me to do now was it? No, didn't think so.

It didn't take long for them to start their...experiments on me. I call them experiments because what else am I to call them?

I quit breathing on them for a while. They had to hook me up to a machine to help me breathe. I figure my lungs didn't quite know what to do yet.

I also had a double hernia which they operated on. The scars are of course still there. I'm told the doctor thought it unnecessary to circumcise me, but my mother insisted. She figured hey they were already down there to begin with, why not?

The bad part about this all...I don't know which order events happened first. I only know details.

They would prick my feet with a pin every once in a while to make sure I was still alive. Guess that makes sense, baby cries, yep he's alive. Way to go team!

I imagine the spinal taps weren't all that fun at all. There were numerous of those done...I really don't want to ever remember that.

I understand they even gave me a full blood transfusion. Guess my own blood wasn't good enough? I don't know. Probably something toxic.

I'm sure the nurses hated me at one point or another. To keep me from peeing on them, they put a balloon over my penis. Darn nurses. Maybe I was the one who was ticked off at them? Who knows.

I had internal bleeding in my eyes, which they fixed with laser surgery. Can you even imagine that? Laser surgery back then! With the advancement of technology these days, I'm sure they were on cutting edge kind of surgery. I'm also very happy they had such abilities back then. I would be blind now if they didn't, so thank heavens for that!

I'm told by my parents that I had quite a fever one night. They threw me in some ice water to shock my system...or something. I might have this event wrong. But I do know they didn't tell my parents till the next morning of what they had done. Good doctors act.

There is a picture my mom has of me...I think she has it. It's of me in the hospital. I'm hooked up to machines. Tubes going left and right. The doctors said that it might be the only picture she could get of me. How sad is that? Oh here's your baby, he might die. Treasure him while you can. Yeah, that's kinda wrong and mean if you ask me.

Or maybe they were simply stating the truth. Instead of sugar coating it. I mean how else do you tell someone their newborn will probably die?

After a few months in the hospital I could go home. I imagine my parents were excited for that. I haven't the faintest idea of what my brother thought. Well except for one slight insight.

One day he went up to my mom and asked "Mama, how long is this baby gonna be with us?"

Poor kid, my mother had to explain to him that I was his brother and I would be with them forever.

I don't think he liked that thought much. Oh well. You live and learn.

My mom tells me I was so excited the first time I got my brother's attention. I was able to say his name, well part of his name. RyRy counts right? I was hoping so. Guess I couldn't stop saying it for a while heh. That'll teach him to pinch me.

Or so I'm told of course. Some friends were visiting my parents. They saw my brother pinch me and let my parents know. Oops... well I couldn't tell them now could I?

I wonder at times what it was like before this mortal stage of life. We're taught that we lived with Heavenly Parents with all of our brothers and sisters in a spiritual form. I imagine my Father in Heaven giving me a hug before I left his presence.

Hopefully I was told what I was getting into. I wonder if they told me about the

problems I would face down here. The anxiety, a trial as my mom puts it, or the other things that go on.

I hope I was told. Even though I would forget everything.

Chapter Two

The Early Years

At a young age of... oh probably eighteen months. Maybe I was two. I don't know. I wanted a glass of orange juice in an actual glass glass. You know the type. They're made out of glass. I didn't want my sippy cup, or whatever I was drinking in those days. Something plastic and unable to break easily if dropped.

You can see where this is going can't you.

So my mom, bless her soul, who was probably getting tired of me whining gave me a glass.

I took a step, and yes I tripped over the leg of the highchair. The glass went flying and I landed on it.

Oh I cut my head good. Blood was coming down my face. I was screaming at the top of my lungs. How much it hurt!

Mom rushed me to the hospital. The doctor came in the room and he asked if my mom beat me. I stopped crying long enough to say "YES!" My mother's face went white as a sheet, the doctor started laughing. Of course my mother didn't beat me...I don't know why I even said that. But they patched me up, gave me stitches and sent us on our way.

I still have a scar where that glass had shattered. I like to look at it from time to time.

Another story I'm told that happened... I was standing at a window. The screen was

flimsy I guess, 'cause I went right out the window. My mother rushed to my side making sure I was okay. I was.

Funny how memories go. My brother thought we were living in a two story house. Yeah...it wasn't a two story house. Like I said, there were many things that I wasn't fully aware about until much later in life. Or at least until I could remember them now without having help from family.

Later on in life, I managed to lock myself in a bathroom. I thought it was all fun and games until I wanted to come out. Then I got worried and frightened. My mother, really bless her soul, she tried talking me through it all and getting me to unlock the door. I couldn't figure it out.

Then I got scared.

The fire department was called to come take the door off the hinges. Why they were called? Haven't a clue.

Sure enough, they took the door off the hinges. One of the firemen looked at me and said "Not so funny now is it?"

My brother thought it was cool. Not everyday does a fire truck show up at the house!

From time to time I wonder what kind of stress I put on my poor parents. You live and learn I suppose...but still I wouldn't mind taking away some of that heartache.

Chapter Three

My Best Friend

My first friend's name was Lisa Moore. We lived on a dead end street. Lisa lived a few houses down from me.

We would do everything together, well it seemed like we did everything together. I was always at her house etc. She would play with her Barbie dolls...I don't remember what I would do. I vaguely remember a toy guitar... I think it was blue?

She was my best friend. That's all that mattered.

One day Lisa's Grandfather was visiting them. I was told to stay away. Well being a kid, I kept asking if I could go visit my best friend.

My mom kept telling me no. I insisted to be let out to see her. She gave in, probably to make me stop being annoying, and off I went.

Knocking on the door, Lisa's mother answered. She was mad that I was there. Taking me by the shoulders she shook me hard.

She said in no uncertain terms that Lisa was visiting with family and I wasn't to be around! She told me to go home. I walked home crying. Feels like it was yesterday.

Feels like I can't seem to let that go for some odd reason. I don't know why that is.

After I moved from that house on that street, I didn't meet up with my friend until a few years later when we were in Junior

High together. I moved shortly after that.
Guess that wasn't a friendship that was
meant to last. I often wonder what
happened to her and what she's doing now.

Chapter Four

Low Blood Sugar

One incident in life that doesn't seem to ever want to go happened when I was very little. Maybe three years old? I don't know. I was old enough to talk and grasp what was going on in my life.

My mom's diabetic. She was having a low blood sugar one day, and me being... well me, I was getting on her nerves. Typical of a three year old wouldn't you think?

Well apparently mom had enough of it and she got out a suitcase and started packing.

I remember trying to take the clothes out of the suitcase and put them back in the drawer from where she got them from. My little hands and legs couldn't keep up with her.

This is not a pleasant memory.

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't keep up with her.

Mom came to her senses finally and stopped what she was doing. She realized she was having a low blood sugar. Taking me in her arms she promised she wouldn't ever leave.

I hate that memory.

She knows I remember it. I know she knows. We don't talk about it. It's too painful to talk about.

Chapter Five

More Young Life

I was held back in third grade. My parents did the right thing to switch schools so I could repeat the year without my friends around me.

I ran across one of them while playing at a playground. My friend, she was now in fourth grade and I was in third. She insisted that she knew me. I told her to go away, that I didn't know her. I was embarrassed from being held back a year.

It was the best thing that could ever have happened to me. I, of course, didn't understand it at the time. The understanding would come years later.

One summer evening I was running outside without socks or shoes on. That's when I stepped on a wood chip. It punctured my foot and found its way inside. I couldn't walk on my foot the next morning without pain. The foreign object had managed to get me for sure.

So they did a surgery on my foot. I remember laying there. The doctor asked my parents if they wanted something to drink. Personally I wanted a root beer, but they didn't ask me if I wanted anything.

Mom held my hand through the procedure. She told me I could scream and cry as loud as I wanted to, but I had to keep my foot still.

After the doctor was done with the procedure, he asked if I wanted to keep the wood chip as a souvenir. I told him no.

I've been lucky in life. Haven't had any broken bones at all. It's a good thing.

I miss that house. It was a ranch style house. One floor. A large swimming pool in the back. A mother in law apartment type of setup well without the kitchen.

I'm told by my parents that I was the one who told my brother Santa wasn't real. I explained to him that it was just mom and dad who put the gifts under the tree and that there wasn't a man known as Santa.

Guess I threw my brother off track with that one...my parents told me if I didn't believe in Santa, I wouldn't get presents. So I pretended to believe. Funny how that is. I think I was three at the time, my brother was five.

It's okay to believe in Santa...even if it is a creepy thing to think about some stranger coming into your house at night while you're asleep.

Chapter Six

The Move

My parents decided to move from California to Utah when I was twelve years old. The high school I would be going to was a mess. It wasn't the best place to raise kids.

So we packed up everything. The two cats and the bird also made the journey. Mom drugged the cats so they would sleep on the drive. Poor things looked so lost and confused.

It was snowing when we moved. They closed some section of freeway barely after we passed through it.

Utah was weird at first glance. In California I was in junior high in the sixth grade. In Utah, sixth grade put me right back in elementary school. I didn't hate it, but I didn't really enjoy it.

I think that's when my grades began to suffer. I can't be certain though. After the move my GPA wouldn't ever go above a 3.0 again.

B's C's and D's is all I would manage to get on report cards. This would last until my senior year in high school.

My friends had changed from elementary school to junior high. I still remember my one friend, I think he took the biggest change of them all.

I wanted to be like those who had changed. So I started swearing. It was the cool thing to do. Nasty habit, wish I never had picked that up.

My one friend asked me about my beliefs once. I chuckled as I told him. He was sure to think I was crazy. We didn't speak of it again after that.

I don't know whatever happened to him.

I wouldn't have a steady stream of friends again until high school, again my senior year had a lot to do with my social life. Talk about interesting.

During that senior year, I made some of the best friends I could ever ask for. My social life was thriving. It all started when I overheard a group of people talking about *Star Trek*, and the friendships formed from there.

I had an english teacher my senior year that managed to reach out to me somehow. Before that year in high school I was the quiet one in class. I didn't really want to participate due to fear of looking stupid. I didn't realize the other students in the class were learning it all for the first time just like I was.

Because of this teacher I participated more and became an active learner in class. I also learned to enjoy and love writing. I began writing short stories mostly fan fiction. It slowly grew into creations of my own ideas.

I went on a mission for The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints in 1998. It lasted for two years and I came home in the year 2000. I served in central Florida. Most missionaries will tell you it's the best two years of their life. To me it was another two years.

When I got back from my mission I went to school to learn computer programming. I learned basic, Visual Basic, C++, and Java. By far Java is most favorite programming language.

Everyone remembers where they were on September 11th, 2001. I woke up that morning and got ready to go to school. The news was reporting what they thought at the time. A small airplane had crashed into one of the World Trade Centers.

Then the second plane came. It wasn't a small airplane as first thought but an actual jetliner.

I went to school. It was the only thing on anyone's mind. Everyone was talking about it. They set up a television and we all watched as the towers fell.

I don't think anyone really was able to focus on their work that day. Such a terrible tragedy.

I had several dreams after that all focusing on the towers. I did my best to forget the events and move on with life. It wasn't a time to allow a few evil men to crush my happiness.

Life moved on as it always does. Career options came and went and came again.

I met my wife in 2007, around August. I was getting out of a weird relationship and she was getting out of a bad marriage. We clicked right off the bat.

We met at Denny's, she had just gotten off work. It must have been midnight. She worked late nights.

I couldn't help but stare into her eyes. Beauty was sitting before me, I had to know all about her. We talked as we ate, she kept checking my ring finger making sure I wasn't married. Perhaps it was just too good to be true? I don't know.

We continued talking on the phone for days, hours at a time. She was usually at work while we talked. Jane worked graves.

A month passed, her divorce was cleared by the judge. He said she was a "free little bird" and she could date people. She moved in shortly after.

We went on a cruise in October. Having professed our love for each other already, I proposed and she accepted. I'm not sure if she accepted because we were in the middle of international waters on a cruise... and she was afraid I'd throw her overboard or leave her in Mexico if she said no...or if she really wanted to marry me. (She's said that she wanted to marry me.)

We were married on April 18th, 2008 in the Manti Utah Temple. I had found the love of my life.

I began writing books in 2012. Well published my first book in 2012. It had been a story in the making. An idea I started in 2003 and finally finishing it in 2012. So I figured why not self publish? Best idea I ever made. Since that time, I've written six more books and published two journals.

It's now 2015 and I'm still just enjoying life the good times and the bad together. What else can a person wish for.

Chapter Seven

Mingle

In 2005, I joined a dating site. My parents thought it was a bad idea, the aunt thought it was a good idea. I had mixed feelings on the thought myself. Whatever came out of it came out of it. I was more interested in making friends than actually dating anyone. Well, that's what I thought at least.

The night after I signed up for the site, I had a dream that something not great was going to happen. I deactivated my account the next day.

I told some friends about the dream, and they said it was nothing that I should go ahead and keep the account. So I logged back in and updated my profile.

Over the course of the next two years I made friends here and there. Went to some activities, and just had fun. Even dated a little on the site. It was a fun experience.

Had a crush on a woman in Idaho for a good year. Fought with my feelings over her a lot. We decided to meet. I traveled to her house where I would stay. That was my first mistake.

The first night we went out to dinner with a group of her friends. It was fun. I don't remember the place we went to though. Then we went to a movie afterwards. I thought I was in love. Looking back now? No, it was only lust.

The next day she showed me around Boise. I was even considering moving there for a brief moment of time. We had plans on going dancing that night, but her friends fell through. We decided to get drunk instead. I think that was the second mistake.

Well one thing led to another and after eight screwdrivers we got comfy. You know how people, when they get drunk...how sometimes they don't remember anything that happened? Well that didn't happen to me. I remember everything to this day.

We started watching a movie. Hands started wandering. I went down on her and proceeded to eat her out. After a few minutes she said "Maybe we should stop." So we did.

She went to the bathroom and I sat down on the stairs. Coming out of the bathroom she looked at me and asked what was wrong. I indicated I had just ruined a friendship. She said I hadn't and started kissing me.

She suggested I go get in my PJs and said we could still cuddle on the couch.

A few minutes later we were cuddling again on the couch. We started making out. Mind you this was the first time I had ever kissed a woman, and one thing led to another and we had sex. It was my first time. I remember being excited and well all of the other feelings that come from such an experience.

The thing that hurt the most was after we were finished, and she was falling asleep...

she said she was sorry for using me. That hit like a blow I didn't expect.

The next morning was rather awkward. She remembered some of the night but not all. I told her what had happened. We went and ate breakfast, and she said we shouldn't talk for a while. I left Idaho and went home.

To be honest I'm rather ashamed of it. We've talked since that time, she's apologized for using me over and over again. I don't know if she ever really did use me or not. Thought we were both consenting adults and just got too carried away.

In some ways I miss her still. I've been learning to simply let go of that. It's better not to keep in contact for sure, there's no reason for it.

Looking back, had I listened to my initial dream that something bad would happen...I should have stopped it all before it had a chance to begin. Yes, that would have been the proper course of action.

Of course with any other experience, it had its learning points. Painful learning points. I'm really not sure if I would change that part of history given the chance.

They say that once something is part of you, if you go back and remove it, you've lost something about yourself. It changes the person you've become today. Am I a better person because of that incident? I'm not sure.

After I returned home, the dreams began. I would dream that things were okay between us and there was nothing to worry

about. I'd wake up in the middle of the night with my heart pounding. Every once in a while I'll still have a dream here and there, but not to the extent they use to be.

In the end I wanted a relationship with her, she did not. It hurts to think about it still. My mind is past it, but my heart still tries to hold onto something that just wasn't real.

Another friend I met on Mingle, well we never really met in person. Still haven't actually. We've talked on the phone and texted and that's about it.

I was falling for her a bit, well until I found out she was getting married. That was the end of that. I had to put any and all feelings I had for away not to be heard from again.

We kept in touch for a few years, and then she kinda disappeared. I would find out a few years later she was trying to save her marriage so she stopped talking with friends of the opposite sex. It made sense. I didn't mind.

Well then her marriage went down hill and she got divorced. I was having some issues with my marriage as well. We started talking again. We were there for each other during the difficult times in life.

As the story goes, we got a little too close. Still never having met, we talked in ways that only lovers or married couples should. You could say it was a moment of weakness. Texts were exchanged as well as pictures, videos, voice mails.

I look back thinking, what in the hell was I thinking? Why did I do such things? It wasn't right. None of it was right.

My wife and I started seeing a therapist. I thought the therapist was helpful, I don't think my wife thought the same. She got us talking, that much was sure...there's still too much pain to describe it all in full detail though. Hurts too much.

Well things got better with my wife and I was ready to drop the friend to show my wife I was committed 100% in our relationship. My wife told me I needed to have friends of the opposite sex. I explained everything that happened, and she still wouldn't let me let my friend go.

We still talk just about every day, but have toned things way back. We're friends and that's it.

Sometimes the emotional connection comes back from time to time, but I have to keep my guard up. There's no point in ruining my marriage over it.

Letting people know how you feel is a risky thing to do. You never know how they will act to it. To say it's complicated, well that's an understatement.

So for the most part, since it would do nothing anyway, I keep my mouth shut and let it all just slide by. Ten to one, the feelings aren't real. They're just made up lust full of nothing.

Once a person learns to build walls, they become good at it. My walls aren't fully effective 100% of the time, but they work for what they need to do. As long as I can keep

those up, they don't have the ability of
letting others in. The walls do their trick.

Sometimes I wonder if it was all a dream.
If someday I'll wake up to realize none of it
happened. I doubt that will ever be the case,
but a person can wish...can't they?

Chapter Eight

The Penguin

So you, dear reader, are probably wondering why I titled this work “The Penguin In Me”. It’s quite simple actually.

Penguin’s don’t feel human emotions. They feel penguin emotions. Since I am a human...well as far as I know (I might just be a penguin, you never know these days), since I am a human, I am forced to feel human emotions.

If I can pretend that I am a penguin, I don’t have to feel the human emotions that humans feel. Well not until I’m ready to feel them. Emotions hurt like hell. They have a way of ripping your heart out piece by piece.

So that’s all there is to being The Penguin. Well to me at least. That’s what it’s all about.

Well not to mention penguin’s are pretty neat. They’re always wearing a tux! Okay there are other reasons penguin’s are nifty. They mate for life. When they find that one special other penguin, they kick a rock over to it letting the other penguin know they’re interested. It’s not just any rock though, they search far and wide for the smoothest pebble out of the bunch. It’s *that* special to them! Who would have thought penguins would do such things.

Chapter Nine

Life

I consider my life to be an open book as it were. If people ask questions they get answers. There's no shame in that. I'm, for the most part, comfortable in my skin. That's a good thing in my opinion. If a person can't be comfortable in their own skin, how will they react when something goes down?

Sometimes living such a life produces anxiety. There's always that sinking feeling that people don't accept you and all of that other shit. Getting past all of those negative thoughts is key.

An interesting part about this whole life thing and with the anxiety are ways to overcome the anxiety part of life and being able to function without it. Unfortunately, anxiety is part of my life...I've been on medication for it since 2003. I'll probably be on that medication for the rest of my life. I've tried going off of it before and it didn't do anything to help. It just made the anxiety worse.

So I have to find other outlets to get rid of the anxiety. Some, though affective, aren't really an option. So I'll table those for now. I've found that writing has been a helpful and beneficial way of getting rid of a panic attack. Being able to write has helped me focus on other things than the anxiety at hand. Sometimes it produces something interesting to read that later flushes out into

a full on story. Other times? Not so much. The writing is just there and doesn't really make much sense. It's just whatever was going through my mind at the time.

But the important part of it all? It works. Now I'm not saying it would work for everyone out there. It works for me. Writing whatever comes into your mind can be interesting of course. It's not always what you expect or want to read later...come to think of it, I haven't really ever gone back and fully read what I was typing at the time of a panic attack. I've skimmed it sure, but haven't really gone back and read it. I should probably do that. It would be fascinating.

Not sure I would like what I would read though...the mind has a tendency to be harsh on a person. Probably down right mean at times. It's just how the mind likes to play things out.

Chapter Ten

The Baby

I don't suppose there's ever a good time to write about the things that rip into you like no other.

I was a father of a baby from about May to September of 2013. We had other foster kids before, but they went back to their dad. We picked him up from the hospital from the NIC-U. Such a cute little boy he was.

He came home with a heart monitor that we watched closely. When that sucker would beep we'd have to check things out. Most of the time it didn't beep during the day. Mostly just at night.

After about a month or so, they took the heart monitor back and the baby was good to go.

I remember walking into his bedroom in the morning to get him up. When he started smiling when I leaned over the crib, that was something else. He had a cute little laugh.

During the time...we were having marital problems...DCFS saw fit to remove the baby from our home. That was one of the more difficult decisions I had to make, but it needed to be done.

I was a father. I had a baby boy.

I don't want to talk about this anymore.

Chapter Eleven

Happy Moments

There are happy moments in my life. I just realized I've been focusing on the more...unpleasant ones. So here's a list:

Being a dad for the first time.

Graduating High School and seeing what the real world was like.

My mission.

Learning how to program.

Finding out how much I enjoy writing and working on it to be something unique to me.

Getting a career.

Seeing my parents move to a better place for health reasons.

Forming new friendships.

Chapter Twelve

The Ocean

Life is like an ocean. The water tells the tale of a person's existence.

Everyone begins on the shoreline. This is where their journey starts. They stand on the shore watching as their parents are out wading in the water. When the time comes, the individual is led into the water little by little a small piece at a time.

Eventually a young man or young woman emerges. They leave the beach and begin to swim in the ocean. At first a person stays close to the shoreline. Some find the deep end quickly while others take a more cautious approach.

Some learn to swim from the experience of others while the rest learn from gaining experience by trial and error.

Sharks swim the ocean looking for bait. Something to sink their teeth into. They would rather steal from a person instead of learning for themselves.

My life has been an interesting trip on the sea of life. There have been times when the waves have tossed me to and fro without concern for anything. Some waves have been easy to navigate while others have been a little more difficult.

Through it all there has been buoys in the water leading me through treacherous water to safety. I have not always followed the buoy markers and have swam among the sharks.

Oh they took a nibble here and a nibble there allowing me to heal before continuing on. By the time I stopped ignoring the warnings it was almost too late. Luckily the sharks lost interest in me and went on to hunt for something a bit less boring. I was grateful when the sharks left yet saddened at the same time.

You see they fascinated me. Here were creatures swimming in deadly waters. Some had scars or wounds they got from experience. The buoy was so far away and the sharks were so close. They made me feel ashamed for wanting to stay among the safer water where the water was mapped and known.

Before I realized it I was deep in with the sharks. I didn't know where to turn. Instead of tearing me apart, they left me to drown. I suppose it was a way of getting back at the weak.

So I started to swim towards the safety of the buoy. By that time it was almost out of sight. I swam and swam fighting the waves as they came upon me. The waves were trying to push me back to the water I had become accustomed to with the sharks.

There were times, I must admit, when it seemed easier to just let go of the drive and determination. It felt easier to allow the waves carry me to certain destruction. Each time my head went under the water I fought to see the goal. The buoy beckoned me to keep fighting against the current.

When the waves died down that's when I swam the hardest. I swam great distances

on those days further then when the waves were crashing down on me. At that moment when I began to think I could do it all by myself and started looking for other places to swim besides the buoy, the storms would come. Great powerful storms causing the waves to start up again. I found myself deep in prayer to an unseen power to help guide me to the buoy. I kept swimming.

There were times when I felt I could no longer swim to keep my goal. No matter how hard I tried, I just was sitting still. Treading water trying to stay afloat and keeping my head above water. I hung on looking day by day for calmer water. It was difficult on days when my mind kept telling me to simply give up.

I admit it would have been easier to do that. I had the means, all I had to do was stop trying. The waters current would eventually take me under, down to a watery grave.

It would have been easier but it wouldn't have been worth it. Deep down I'm a fighter. Have been since the day I was born. One has to have a strong will to battle the waves of day to day life.

So instead of giving up and going to that watery grave I kept pressing on. It was a while before I made it to the buoy. Felt like years to be honest. But I made it.

My journey was far from over. Yes I made it to the buoy. I could have found a nearby island and stayed there. Perhaps I would have been content for a while. But having

been in the ocean for this long I came to an interesting realization.

You see, the ocean is vast. There are many places to explore and discover. So I looked for the next buoy and the next one after that. I keep looking for my buoys to swim to.

Each buoy adds to my experience. Each buoy adds to my life's existence. With each buoy I grow and learn. Somedays there are no buoys to swim to so I make my own. I forge my own path through the great ocean that is my life.

I am my own ship in a vast array of ships. Each one going its own direction and speed. Sure it would be easy to stay in port or on the beach where it's safe.

That's not what I'm here for. No. I'm here to live a life that's full. A life that is made to explore and experience the sea.

My life is my ocean.

No one can take that away from me.

Mon August 5, 2013