

A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE

By Juanita Sparks 7-4-2011 (404words)

On February 22, 2011, my left leg was amputated. My most frightening experience came later. The amputation was a done deal before I knew it was happening; I had no voice in the decision.

The frightening part came, when I had to face a lifetime without one leg. Recovery was terrifying. I became one of those patients that hospital staff dread having to care for.

I swore at God. I cussed the nurses. I threatened suicide. I refused food. I rejected medication.

Just how does one commit suicide in a hospital room; there are no knives or gas, and I had given up on pills?

How could I go on living in this horrible condition? I was ninety years old and had one leg only. The picture was sinister.

Then the God, at whom I had committed blasphemy, came to my rescue. He sent a nurse named Hannah to my bedside. Hannah is surely one of His angels on Earth.

Hannah never urged me to take my meds or food. What Hannah did was point out how disappointed my family and legion of friends would be when they found out that I didn't want to live or get well. That did it. I was still the most frightened person alive, but her words put a new viewpoint I on my situation.

I started to eat a little. I took my pills. Bit by bit Hannah's words began to make some sense. They didn't take away the fear, but gave a slant on my responsibilities.

All the while my family and friends were at my bedside or a phone call away.

Then one day a therapist came, holding a walker. He got me out of bed, and showed me how to hold on. "Hop" he said. Scared as I was I hopped, holding on to a walker that I calculated at Civil War vintage.

Another day the same therapist appeared with a wheel chair. He helped me into the thing, and said, "Push." I pushed. The chair was less forbidding than the walker had been.

Meanwhile my support group of family and friends stood by me. I received cards and gifts and daily visits.

Each day brought new challenges, and to some extent my fears lessened. The fears did not go away, but were less terrifying.

The most daunting was the day when a therapist announced, "You are ready To go home."

How could I function at home? Some suggested that I get someone to stay with me, at least at night. My family members all worked, so that meant I would have to hire someone. No! That would be too frightening to have a stranger stay in my apartment at night. I opted to go it alone.

Each day did and still does bring new challenges, but I know that much can be accomplished if one just makes up her mind. I know now what I have heard repeated many times:

Life Is Good.