

The Pain of Learning

by

Christopher Robb

It is sad to say that it took reconstructive surgery and more than a few stitches, before I learned to listen to my parents. I was just one of those kids that did not behave at all, a complete terror. I was stubborn and defiant to the end. It was because of my stubbornness and the fact that I did not want to listen to my mother that my eyes were opened to the pain of learning. This unexpected accident cost my parents a lot of money and caused me a lot of pain. Needless to say, this experience had a major influence on my behavior and the relationship between me and my parents.

It was during my fourth grade year at RoseHill Elementary that my accident occurred. I was ten years old and thought I knew it all. Whenever someone told me not to do something that was the first thing I did. It was during a three day weekend that I wanted to go rollerblading, when my mother's voice fell on deaf ears. The morning was just starting and I was getting ready to leave when my mother forbade me to go. I defiantly told her that I was going and left the house before she could say anything else.

My morning started out enjoyable, with the sun shining and the birds singing, but it was not going to last. One block west from my house there was a long hill that was familiar to me, so I headed for it. The hill is steep, so I start to pick up speed fairly quickly. I had rollerbladed down this hill several times without a problem, but this morning was going to be different. Heading down the hill and gathering speed like a run away train, I began to brake. Luck was not on my side that morning and the brake on my right foot found the only pothole in the street, sending me flying through the air.

Imagine a swimmer being thrown into a pool face first, no hands, just the face. Now, keep that image in your head and it is possible to see what happened to me. When my foot caught the pothole, I was thrown forward. I tried to turn my fall into a forward roll but was not quick enough. My chin made contact with the concrete first. Then, my mouth hit the street, or more specifically my front teeth, and I heard a cracking sound. After my teeth came my nose. Shocked, bleeding a torrent of blood, and in mind numbing pain, I instinctively went home at the fastest pace possible. Some people say that good luck and bad luck go hand in hand. I believe this is true because it was bad luck that my accident happened, but it was good luck that I wasn't even a block away from my house. Coming to my house, I was screaming at the top of my lungs. When I walked through the front door my mother came running. The horrified look on her face scared me more than anything else could have. The only thing that my mother had for my face and chin was a wet washcloth, and a sandwich baggy full of ice. She didn't know where to take me first. Should she take me to the hospital for my chin, which was hanging down a good two inches, or to the dentist for my busted front teeth?

After quickly talking with the doctor on the phone, my mother took me to the hospital first. When the doctor gave me a shot to numb my chin it didn't even register through the pain. The one part that I did feel was the pulling on my chin as the needle passed through my skin. Surprisingly, it only took seven stitches to repair the damage. With that part done, my mother took me to the dentist. I would have to say that my teeth were what hurt the most. Looking in a mirror enabled me to see the root of my left front tooth hanging down. That was what hurt so much; every breath taken agitated the root, blowing it back and forth, sending waves of pain through my mouth.

At the dentist, I had to wash my mouth out several times. There was so much blood that the dentist couldn't see what she was doing. My mind will never let me forget the process. The high shrill sound of the drills and the vibrations I felt when they made contact with my teeth made me hate being there. My head was pushed so far back into the headrest that I thought it would pass right through. The worst of it all though was the smell. Actually being able to smell my teeth burning from the drill made me want to throw up. Two hours later, I was walking out of the dentist's with new front teeth. When I landed on the concrete my front teeth were broken out in the shape of an upside down V. The dentist rebuilt them to look just like real teeth. Numb and sore, I went home.

The next day, going back to the hill, I could tell right where it happened because there was a pool of dried blood still present. There was also a trail of blood, easy even for a blind man to follow, that lead all the way up the hill and around the corner to my front yard. Not knowing it at the time, my accident also affected my vision. Prior to my accident I had near perfect vision. Not two weeks after, glasses became a priority. Had I listened to my mother that morning, I would have saved myself a lot of pain and money.

Life is all about lessons and learning, but I would have preferred to have gone without the pain of this lesson. If I had though, I would not have learned to listen to my parents. When they tell me to do something, it is for my own good. They are just looking out for me and they usually know what's best. My defiance diminished after this and even though I am still stubborn, I usually know when to give in. Had I listened to my mother on that morning, I would have saved myself the pain of learning.