



# Finding My Way

After surviving AIDS as a child, Willie Jackson searches for his purpose.

May 25, 2026 By Willie Jackson

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I was born HIV negative, but at age 2, I contracted HIV from a family member through mastication. She was diagnosed with AIDS. She had open cuts in her gums and would feed me by putting the food in her mouth to cool it. She passed away before I could talk to her.

I matured very early on because of the stigma I faced as a child. Through my journey, I've been on my death bed. My doctors told me I didn't have any more white blood cells to fight any kind of infection and that hospice was my only choice. I wrote a will, and I kept taking my meds. I got better.

I'm not successful or rich. Just a guy trying to stay afloat. I went to school and got my associate's degree in medical assisting, but I still feel lost honestly.

What three adjectives best describe you?

Resilient, kind, quiet.

What is your greatest achievement?

Becoming undetectable and getting my associate's degree.

What is your greatest regret?

Not feeling seen.

What keeps you up at night?

Wondering what's my purpose? Why am I here?

If you could change one thing about living with HIV, what would it be?

The stigma.

What is the best advice you ever received?

Keep going. You have a purpose.

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what is the one thing you would grab on the way out?

My phone.

If you could be any animal, what would you be?

An eagle.

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<http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/finding-way-purpose>