

POZ Stories: Dominique Banks

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✖ It's no surprise that Dominique Banks considers her greatest regret in life to be “dating the wrong men.” While in college, she fell in love with an Army man who fathered her first child. But before long, he became physically abusive. She tried to leave but always went back.

In 2008, after coming down with a severe infection, she went to the hospital and learned she had HIV. “That night,” Banks recalls, “I called my son’s father and told him. He told me that I must have received it from someone else.” Soon enough, though, he too was diagnosed with the virus. “I was mad at him and myself,” she says. “I began to go into a depression. A week later, I went back to school. With the help of my friends and family, I left him and got back on my feet.”

But then Banks decided to give him yet another chance—until he stole her checks and deposited money in another woman’s account. The police were alerted. When they showed up at the house to arrest him, he tried to cut his throat in the bathroom. “When they took him to the hospital,” she recalls, “I broke down crying on my bloody floor. I knew the only person I had to rely on was God. I prayed to him and made a promise that I would never go back with my son’s father ever again. And I kept that promise.”

Since then, life has been a series of both tribulations and triumphs for this Memphis, Tennessee, mother. She graduated from college with honors in 2009 and gave birth to another son in 2014. Finding steady employment has been a struggle for her—a career highlight was her stint as a peer advocate liaison for HIV/AIDS—and she’s currently working for AIDS group Friends for Life.

“God works in mysterious ways,” Banks says of her journey. “I am dedicated and don’t let anything stop me. And I’m a devoted mother to my two boys.” It’s no surprise that she considers her motto to be “Never give up.”

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