Brother to Brother

July 19, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

Hey Bro,
I know we haven't had the best relationship growing up and even right now there are still some strained parts. I asked myself why and the truth of the matter is that we just didn't get to know each other.

That's strange as we were raised under the same roof, but there were things about you that I didn't understand as I'm sure you can say the same of me. It's kinda sad as I see other examples of brothers and the closeness they have. Yet that type of knowing each other has eluded us. Most brothers have memories of playing together, going fishing or play fighting.

I think we just fought.

I remember some of those fights. And as we got older I want to say you really changed. You would try to harm me by throwing bricks at me or having me hold a firecracker in my hand promising me it was only the kind that sparkled knowing it was a small explosive. Then in high school you told me not to let other people know i was your brother.

I didn't know why, but even though it hurt, I still did what you said because you were still my big brother. If I had to go back to the most painful memory it was when you saw me walking down the same side of the street you were on and to avoid me you crossed the street and passed me by. I didn't understand.

I started to not see you as a brother but just someone who was another man in the house. I don't know what you saw in me.

Schizophrenia.

When we learned you were diagnosed with it, it still didn't make the clouds go away. If anything it made me more afraid of you. At that time I knew if you had it you were 'crazy'. In a way plenty of the things you did started to make sense.
It was so foreign to me and I was scared I was going to catch it from you if you touched me or shared the same items. I looked at you as if you were a walking disease and I wanted to physically not be close to you. i didn't even know how to spell it but i was glad it was you and not me.

Then I got HIV.

We both now had something that we were struggling with. Yet in my selfish world I wanted you to know what I was going through and what I had. I factored your ignorance of it as simply that, ignorance. I don't know what I was looking for from you but maybe deep inside I was looking for that big brother that was going to let me know it was going to be okay.
Yet I never asked about your struggle. I had placed you on a one way street. I wanted you to read about what I had so we could talk, but I didn't do the same for your condition. I wanted you to put your arms around my shoulder yet I didn't do the same for you. I wanted you to not stigmatize me, but yet I stigmatized you.

I didn't understand.

I'm writing this to say that as we get older, life is to short and not promised and now I have started to understand. Our battle is the same and just because it's described differently it has changed both our lives. But now I understand that if I want that close relationship I have to know the road you travel with your disease and hopefully you'll learn about mine. I finally understand that I can't keep running from you and that you're part of me.

I understand that you're my brother, my big brother, and even though we didn't let the words leave our lips, I do love you. You'll always be my big brother no matter how old we get. And I have faith we can find our way back to each other and not let our condition dictate our relationship. It's a good sign that we're now calling each other because for once I think we want the same thing.

Like the song says, "It's more than you. It's more than me. No matter what we are we are a family"

And just know I'm ending this post but never my love for you.
Sincerely
your little bro

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