Monday Reflection: Can You See The Ram?

September 16, 2013 By Rae Lewis-Thornton

People are always looking for that, "Ram in the Bush," just like Abraham, me included. For you church goers, everyone knows the story of Abraham and Isaac. As the story goes, God told Abraham to sacrifice his only child Isaac on the altar.

So Abraham took Isaac to the altar and just as he was getting ready to make the sacrifice, he saw a ram in the bush that could be sacrificed instead of Isaac. Now I have to be honest, I don't know about you, but if God asked me to lay my little Sophie on the altar, I just may lay down and die; that's a whole lot of faith and a whole lot of obedience.

Honestly, when you kept hoping for that “break through” and all you get is life moving alone, you do begin to wonder if God has a ram in the bush for you. You wonder, is my faith big enough? Do I need to have Abraham size faith to get the breakthrough that I’m hoping for?

When think of all the challenges I’ve had with my health over these years, combined with all my financial issues these last 7 years, I’ve learned to look at this idea of the ram in the bush in a different way.

For me, I’ve had to deconstruct this concept and then reconstruct it to actually fit the reality of my life living with AIDS. I had to think about the sum total of my life, not just my right now. I think applying your own faith and your own circumstance, to your own life, makes for a better life

emotionally and mentally.

Now in the scheme of things, I’m an optimist. I believe that God wants the best for us and with hard work and perseverance that best happens. The problem is everyone’s individual interruption

of the best. In the age of Gold Card Christianity on the one hand, i. e. I want. What I want, when I want it and I expect God to deliver it and on the other of Pinterest Boards, where we create the most elaborate weddings, future closest and homes, I wonder how grounded we are in reality. I also wonder if our wish list for better, blinds us from seeing the real blessings in our life.

Now I don't know if my faith could measure up to Abraham's; I mean for real for real. But for sure, I hold my own in the faith department. Remember, when I learned my HIV status, it was so early in the pandemic that the HIV anti-body test was only two years old and AZT was on the horizon in the near future and then that was all we had for some years, but I never gave up or in!

For sure taking 600 mg of AZT was like the kiss of death staring me in the face. I was so sick all the time. Then eventually they reduced my dosage to 300 mg, but I never stop being sick.

For 5 long years I suffered through the side-effects of AZT, but at the time, it was my ram in th bush. Then more medications came. Lord knows I thought nothing could be worst than AZT but I was sooooo wrong. DDI was a nightmare. Grinding those to alker seltzer size tablets and mixing them in water was nasty.com then apple juice, more nasty.com. I don't drink apple juice today because of DDI. There were days when I would hold that glass in my hand for a better of 10 minutes and will myself to drink it, but it was my ram in the bush and I did it.

By this time, I had made a transition to AIDS and the life expediency was 3 years back then, at most, so my ram in the bush became 21 pills a day. A three combination of Anti-Viral; I took DDI, AZT and 3TC. Then there were the medications that I had to take to prevent opportunistic infections, I took something to prevent MAC, Yeast, Herpes, and PCP, that was my ram in the bush. But then I still got PCP, 3 times because bactrim the best medication caused me to have a burning rash and the other medications for PCP didn't work for me.

I saw death starting me in the face. Yep, my T-Cell count had made it to and all time low of 8, I was a size zero the quality of my life was an equal zero. I was speaking non-stop and when I got off the road I would crash until it was time to hit the road again. My ministry didn't stop because I was dying.

Then as death was really calling my name I got yet another ram in the bush, protease inhibitors the fist major breakthrough in HIV medication came and I took 21 tablets of Ritonavir (Norvir) a day combined with other HIV medications and the medications to prevent opportunistic infections and I felt, if AIDS didn't kill me, the medications would.

I was so sick from the side-effects that I didn't want to go on. But there was yet another ram in the bush waiting for me. After spending 6 hours on the bathroom floor shitting and throwing up, I called my doctor and announced, "I quit," My 5 feet, maybe a 110 pounds wet doctor, Mardge Cohen screamed life back into me that Sunday. Yep, she was my ram in the bush on many days in those really bad years of AIDS.

So I held on, believing that something better would come and it did, one development of HIV medication after another, I just had to keep holding on to receive it. See, action works really well with faith. If Abraham had never made the deliberate action of sacrificing Isaac, he would have never seen that ram. So I apply this concept to all aspects of my life not just my health. Especially to my finances, I have no money, well I put my clothes, handbag and shoes on Ebay, that becomes my ram. I change my lifestyle.

I recently disconnected my cable since I almost never watch TV anyway. I stopped my Sunday delivery of the New York Times *tears* My monthly book budget got squashed. I can’t buy a new

book until 2014 *tears* but I need to workout so my funds are shifted to the gym. **Sometimes the ram is just a matter of making hard decisions about your right now.** It's ok to not have everything you want to have the things that you need.

Certainly this GiveFoward Fund for me is a ram in the bush and I thank God for Dwana for starting it and for every person who has donated in the last week. It's blowing my mind the comments alone. Its good to know the impact that I have had on people. Its like the GiveForward Fund is a chance to have my roses while Im still yet alive and with depression setting in thick, the comments are giving me new life.

My bracelet business is yet another ram. God gave me a design talent and I utilize it with each bracelet I design and I'm always working on better and better and better. When I started my

bracelet business I had friends to actually ask, “Who’s going to buy them,” I didn’t let their pessimism on the front end stop me and now 4 years in, some days bracelet sales is all the money that I have. **I wonder how many of you have talents that are not being utilized. Your gifts for sure are a ram in the bush.**

I have so many rams in the bush from so many different areas of my life and we all do, we just over look them.

We spend so much time waiting on that pie in the sky breakthrough when we miss the ram lurking around waiting on us to have vision grounded in reality to recognize that God always has a Ram in the Bush… Can you see the ram?

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