

# Chicken Soup for the Soul<sup>®</sup>



# Thanks Mom

101 Stories of  
Gratitude,  
Love, and  
Good Times

Jack Canfield,  
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Foreword by Joan Lunden



## Carrying Me Forward

*Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.*

~M. Kathleen Casey

Dear Mom,

Thank you for carrying me. Not just in your womb, but thank you for carrying me to the ambulance when I was six. Thank you for carrying me emotionally through an ordeal from a split-second accident that would change the course of our lives. Thank you for carrying me through life as an amputee.

It was many years ago and you and Dad had just bought your dream apartment on Central Park West. I remember on the weekends we had so much fun at our farm in upstate New York. The horseback riding, snowmobiling, bike riding, fishing, swimming in ponds and playing with all the farm animals was amazing.

Until that fateful summer. You must regret ever letting me sleep at a friend's house that night. But who could have known? Kids do crazy things. I have often wondered how you coped with that phone call telling you I was stuck in a farm conveyor belt and that it looked like your precious six-year-old daughter was going to lose her leg. How did you watch rescue workers spend three hours sawing free my mangled, manure-ridden leg? How did you watch me screaming and scared, not knowing if I would live or die? How courageous you were when the rescue squad told me to stop screaming and you, instead, whispered in my ear, "Keep screaming, darling."

How did we endure three long summer months in hospitals

trying to ward off the gangrene, trying to save my leg? I remember when you had to go to the bathroom. I was so scared that you had to leave the door open so I could see you from my hospital bed. I remember your friends taking turns bringing you changes of clothing. Together we survived many operations, oxygen tents, hyperbaric chambers and many painful bandage changes. We endured a nightmare with you begging the nurses to wet the bandages before the doctors came to rip them off. When the ripping began and the pain was unbearable, you would bite my thigh to divert the pain. Imagine that, the horror of such a scene. Thank you for never leaving me. *Thank you.*

You tried your best to save my leg, but by August, we had to have my foot amputated. How great you were when you told me I would be like the Bionic Woman! You set the tone for what happened next. When they removed the rest of my leg, the emotional impact was minimal because of how you handled me. Being an amputee was not, and has never been, a dominating factor in my life. You did not allow me, or anyone, to dwell on it. You treated me like every other kid, encouraging strong academics, music, and a healthy social life. You never accepted anything less than my best effort. Thank you for never treating me differently.

Despite my bulky, below-the-knee prosthetic leg, you had me swimming in the ocean, running to parties, and cheering for my high school football team! You instilled in me confidence and security, which served as armor to thwart strange looks, uncomfortable questions and pity. Thank you for giving me the skills to cope.

When I grew up, I attended Vassar College, visited Paris and graduated from law school. I could have never done any of this without the support, love and security you gave me. I always felt like the luckiest girl in the world. I always felt so pretty, so beautiful, despite the leg.

Today, I am a proud mother of three children close to my age when I slipped into the conveyor belt. I wish you were here to help me raise them. Being a mother, I find myself with a true and profound understanding of what you endured. Your pain must have

been agonizing and unbearable—far worse than mine. Throughout it all, you were elegant, stunning and graceful, inside and out. You were the purest and most honest example of a lady. If I can be one tenth of what you were as a woman, wife and mother then I will have realized my dreams. You were one of a kind.

Mom, this letter is to let you know that I am okay. Somehow, you paved a life for me with minimal suffering from this ordeal. Thank you for making my profound loss feel like nothing. Thank you for allowing me to live, love and grow up normally. Thank you for never letting me see your sadness, depression, fear or rage. You led by example. Thank you for giving me the strength and courage that I am now able to carry forward to other amputees in need of help. Thank you for teaching me that it is life's imperfections that make it all the more beautiful.

~Aviva Drescher

