

# The Fighter

Category: Getting the News

written by Pamela Obi | January 1, 2017

This was the third time he coded. Dean had been in the ICU for over a week without any visitors, telephone calls, flowers or balloons. He came in after an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest which he survived and subsequently had another arrest halfway through his stay here. He sure was a fighter.

With special help from the ICU team, we found a contact number for his mother after doing some research on the internet. I was tasked to call her and inform her he was in the hospital.

I had barely finished rehearsing my speech when he became unresponsive. A code blue was called and chest compressions ensued. My senior resident signaled to me to make the call. I nervously dialed the number and secretly prayed she wouldn't answer.

"Hello," said the soft voice on the other end of the phone. It took me a few seconds to gather courage to introduce myself and inform her why and where I was calling. She said she hadn't seen or spoken to Dean in a few years.

As the code continued, I explained to her that he was dying, and the team was working on him. She asked for more explanation, so I told her people were pushing on his chest to pump his heart. And that he was getting medications to help accomplish the same task.

It felt unreal. I imagined her sitting on a chair, frail, holding tightly to the phone with tears softly streaming down her cheeks.

She wanted me to stay on the phone with her, so I complied. She enquired about my background. It felt awkward telling her about my life as I looked into Dean's room and saw the chest compressions still ongoing.

After a while, I looked at my watch and realized that fifteen minutes had passed since we started the conversation. I desperately wanted to get off the phone but felt so sad for her that all I could do was hold on tightly to the phone.

Once the code ended, I told her he didn't make it. She thanked me for the call. I didn't know how to respond.

The rest of my day felt like a fog. I wondered if she had anyone to talk to, to cry with or to comfort her.

I still think about that morning and only hope she got the support she needed to grieve for her son.

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