

Consumed by Anger

Category: Letting Go

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | December 1, 2018

For almost forty-five years, I have been angry. While this anger never leaves me, it becomes more profound on December 11, my son's birthday. It was on that day in 1973 that the seeds of anger were planted.

As a naïve twenty-six-year old, I convinced myself that my pregnancy and aftermath would go smoothly. I would not have morning sickness; I would give birth—after an easy labor and delivery—on my due date; and I would immediately bond with my baby through nursing and maternal love.

All went according to plan—until the Sunday of my hospital discharge. After the 2:00 a.m. feeding, I got out of bed to use the bathroom when clots dropped from my body like bombs from a plane. Blood splattered on my legs, arms, and gown; a few spots even dotted my face. I screamed, the nurse came, and I collapsed onto the bed.

“Hmm,” the nurse said, “it looks like not all of your afterbirth has been removed.”

I reacted to her assessment with anger. My anger grew as I waited eight hours for my ob-gyn to arrive to examine me. My anger intensified when he said I was fine and could go home the next day. And my anger exploded from me when, again in the middle of the night but this time at home, more clots erupted from me—with such force that they turned the bathroom ceiling into a red Jackson Pollock painting.

An ambulance rushed me to the hospital. My doctor, suddenly concerned, performed an emergency D&C. I missed my son's bris—a Jewish religious ceremony performed on a male child one week after his birth. The shock from the loss of blood caused my milk to dry up. My joy at giving birth to a healthy child disintegrated into post-partum depression.

My doctor had not done his job during the delivery procedure. The anger I have felt since then haunts me, even when I spend time with my 6'4" strapping, healthy son.

For my mental health, I need to let go. I need to put the past behind me and be grateful that the “incident” had no long-lasting effect on my son or our relationship. I need to recognize that even physicians make mistakes—and do not always have the humility to acknowledge them.

But on December 11, 2018, I know anger will again consume me.

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