

# A Kick of Gratitude

Category: Gratitude

written by Esther Pottoore | November 4, 2021

When I finally called and told my in-laws that I was six-and-a-half months pregnant with a baby boy, they were over the moon! I had lost two babies as miscarriages before my son and daughter were born, so I was wary of breaking the news early. We decided to name him after my dad Joseph, as my oldest was named after my father-in-law!

A few days later, working as a nurse in a local hospital, I went in to help one of the nursing attendants put a patient on a stretcher. It was a busy shift: I was covering for two nurses and had my own patient load and was rounding on all their patients. The patient, Ms. Smith, was being hospitalized for pneumonia and we needed a chest x-ray.

In addition to the pneumonia, Ms. Smith had schizophrenia, and she had not taken her medicine for the past two weeks. When I started to lift her to the stretcher, she lashed out at me.

“Hey! Ms. Smith, I have a little one here,” I said patting my belly as I stepped away from her to avoid her hitting me. “Let me help you to the stretcher from the bed.”

She agreed and I got the feet while Liz (the NA) got her shoulders. As soon as we put her on the stretcher, she kicked me in the belly saying, “You m-f-r! Take that!”

I jumped back, shaken. Liz took her to Xray.

It was a glancing blow, I told myself, and never got checked out. A week later, when I went back to get the official ultrasound result from my doctor, she could not find a heartbeat. My baby had died from the kick as the repeat ultrasound showed that the baby had grown one more week from the last one. I had carried my dead son for a week unaware. I ended up getting the baby out under general anesthesia and was filled with rage and anger towards Ms. Smith.

That night, as I lay crying and weak in my bed, my uncle came visiting and invited me for a night mass of Eucharistic adoration, not knowing that I had just come from the hospital. My husband told me to go; he would take care of our two children. I went and wept all night asking for strength to forgive and the grace of healing. After morning mass I was at peace and was able to forgive her.

I have used this experience to help women who have gone through trauma, abortions and miscarriages to give them strength. Who thought that a kick of hatred would turn into an experience where others found comfort and healing by discussing their loss with me? So, I kick back in gratitude, for every pain one goes through can be turned around to help another person who may be

silently suffering.

I am sure, somewhere in heaven, my son Joseph approves and waits patiently for our reunion.

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