

STRAIGHT FROM HEART

MY INSPIRING STORY !

Summary : My story is about facing adversity and overcoming obstacles in personal and professional life simultaneously. It is about my struggle towards 'let go' or 'hold on'? My mother inspired me throughout her life that a woman is sensitive and strong at the same time. That kept me sane through prolonged emotional agony and extremely difficult times during my studies towards a Master's degree. This academic degree would add to my professional experience and prospects, as an Architect. Knowledge in a profession is one part, but it is our virtues and inculcated beliefs that truly help us succeed.

My inspiring story

2 April 2020, I was holding my mother's hand and kissed her forehead, hoping she could feel my touch, that might momentarily calm my heart. She had lost her appetite, she had lost her ability to communicate, her awareness was hazy, my mother was dying. I was emotionally numb to the outside world, the coronavirus, the innumerable deaths, the lockdown, the resulting crisis, as I could only feel my world devastating. My heart was filled with excruciating pain, deep fear, helplessness, a feeling that I can't explain in words. Few seconds I looked away and my mother was gone forever. I miss her and the heart never heals. To 'let go' is agonizing. To 'let go' is love. I 'hold on' to that unconditional love and her light. My mother inspired me throughout her life that a woman is sensitive and strong at the same time.

I learnt to walk, speak, read, write and draw for the first time from my mother. I remember her concerns, her teachings, her moral presence throughout my academics, my dance performances, my cooking, my artistic creations, and every small thing. Besides working as an Architect since the year 2003, I had taken up my favorite subject of Landscape Architecture for further studies, which would add to my professional experience and prospects. Not just for passion towards the subject, I wanted to get my Master's degree, especially in my mother's presence. With the unpredictability of how many days she had, I wished to give my mother some relief and peace through my progress, as there was no cure to her Interstitial Lung Disease. For three years, it was traumatizing for me to see the effects on her body, due to the slow death of her lung cells and the scary emergencies. I very much chose to 'let go' of many professional opportunities. My struggle was multifold, between the role of a caregiver, nurturing woman for home, a Master's student, a design teacher for my students, and a daughter to my father who equally felt the anguish. My struggle was even to 'let go' or 'hold on' to my studies.

Difficulties come from all directions. Forms of favoritism, insecurities, negative politics, manipulation are not so uncommon. Our trying times expose people around us. Some need to pick on us and pull us down, some can't control their biases, some are judgemental who constantly judge our responses, some look for their benefits, and some need to isolate us. Standing up for myself led to denials, accusations, and defensive

reactions. Some people pretend like they do consider our situation. I would do my best, despite the circumstances. Many times my mother would gasp for breath, and for all the above reasons, even I would gasp for breath. Extremely few could step in my shoes.

My father, an Architect, was unaware of my professional and academic struggles. I never discussed, to avoid adding to his stress. At times, he gives the example of Galileo, who wasn't spared. Close to the 16th century, Galileo emphasized that 'Earth revolves around the Sun'. He was wronged, ridiculed, criticized, and imprisoned for advocating Heliocentrism, and Heresy. Today people have a different perspective on it, and his discoveries were the crucial link for others. People get unfair, and all may not approve, accept progressive thoughts, beliefs, or ideas, all may not respect our knowledge, passion, or decisions. For our peace, we need to 'let go' of resistance, 'let go' of what we cannot change. My final jury was a couple of days after my mother passed away. My struggle was even to 'let go' or 'hold on' to give the final exams. Midst grief too, I followed exactly what my mother would have desired. In the first attempt, I achieved a Master's Degree, at the age of 40 in the year 2020, with the support of my father, a few true friends, and the blessings of my beloved mother. I chose to 'let go' of those hurtful accusations, judgments, sarcasm, gossips, criticism that were constantly chipping off the confidence and faith of a sensitive person. No way I would quit, as it was only for my mother.

Inside me, as well as outside, there was a massive cloud of agony, irreparable and irreversible. To 'let go' is a struggle, to 'let go' is arduous, to 'let go' is to fight with one's own self, to 'let go' is courageous, to 'let go' is strength, and to 'let go' is success. Inside me, as well as outside, there were traces of Love, Kindness, Empathy, Compassion, Abundance, Confidence, Value, Faith, Friendships, and a unique Free Spirit within. Simply 'hold on' there.

Love ... Paulomi

HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY ! [Story Shared on Facebook on 8th March 2021]

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