

Fear of Abandonment

By Angelic Simone

When I was around of the age of seven, I always had this reoccurring dream at least three times a month. I would find myself standing in a parking lot in front of my old elementary school watching other children dash past me and hop into vehicles. They were running away from something I would see at a distance. It was a lengthy and skinny human figure that waved its arms wildly in the air. I had an instinct it wanted to kill us.

As the sun was setting, leaving a horrid color of blood red in the sky, I would spot my vehicle and my mom inside of it. She sat in the driver's seat looking forward and clutching the wheel. Her eyes were fixed on the monster as it snatched children. I would make a beeline to her car, but She always drove off before I started to move. I was left alone in the parking lot and the terrifying figure would run towards me.

The sheer horror of the nightmare instilled a fear of abandonment within me. The dream always ended in my mother leaving me behind with the monster. Years had gone by. The dreams stopped and changed with my age, but when they say, "dreams come true", believe it. The day of my graduation, I felt as if it was happening in reality except the monster wasn't there this time.

My mother decided to move to Florida. She wasn't feeling to well living in Chicago and wanted a change. I knew she wanted to move since I was little. I remember our first family trip

to Florida before my first year of high school. She loved the brightness of the state. The sun was always fierce and burning at the right temperature no matter where it rested in the sky. The clouds seemed to be more luscious than Chicago's grey blankets of overcast. The people were even friendlier. I suppose life to Floridians in constant heat was full of bliss because they didn't have to worry about the hellish northern winters. She wanted to live that life and spoke about it every year.

I would listen to her complain each winter, "More snow. I can't stand driving in this weather. Now the heat bill is going to go up. I wouldn't have this issue if I lived downstate."

She never angrily expressed her hatred for the weather. She spoke those words with gloom. The season that was the most festive brought her spirits down lower and lower as the years progressed. So, I watched her carefully because my mother suffered from depression mixed with alcoholism. I wasn't sure about her mental state, but at the time I didn't understand it. She would wake up early each morning and I would hear her cry as she prepared her day. I pondered deeply about her attitude while she was at work and when I would make it home from school, she would be asleep from intoxication.

To speed things forward, my mother finally came up with the decision to move. She had enough of the winter and didn't want to spend another one in it. My entire family was on board except myself. I had seen no future for myself in Florida. I wanted to go to college with my friends and live a normal young adult fun-filled life, but she didn't care. The date was set in stone and nothing could deter her from the decision.

The night of my graduation as my friends hugged each other while I wide-eyed, sweating, and mentally freaking out. My peers invited me to several parties, but I couldn't attend because I

had to pack the rest of my belongings. My mother was somewhere in the crowd of people. I was expecting everyone to run for their cars as the monster of my childhood nightmares would appear, but I suppose he manifested himself into my own fear.

“Tomorrow is the big move!” My mother shouted with joy when we got home. I told her that I wasn’t going, and she simply replied, “Ok.”

I wasn’t ready to go. In my heart, I hoped she felt my pain of moving away from close friends and family, but when I looked into her eyes I seen her own sadness. I still didn’t understand why she had this urge to go so soon when I still needed her in my life. I didn’t see anything in Florida and knew she wasn’t truly prepared to set camp there. She had no job lined up and no home. I expressed to her how I felt about her leaving me and she was taking a huge leap of Faith, but it didn’t change her mind.

After a kiss goodbye and a prayer for protection over me, my mother and I separated. She drove off while I rode a bike in the heat of a starting summer to my grandparents’ house. They lived in the same neighborhood and welcomed me to stay with them until I got on my feet. We had our last exchange of glances at a neighborhood street intersection. I quickly looked away and crossed the street. She sped off towards the main highway.

I learned that everyone experiences a moment of tenderness in their lives. A time when we need someone at our side who is compassionate, understanding, and has knowledge of who we are as if they personally dissected our bodies, opened our skulls to pick at our minds, and used a microscope to look at the fragments of our souls. First as babies to toddlers, then toddlers to adolescents, adolescents to teens, teens to young adults, and finally you hit your final

milestone. You're an adult. Surprisingly hitting a midlife crisis involves the understanding of someone to help the midlife person to cope and accept.

I cried. I felt sick for weeks. I needed my mother. I needed her love. Her compassion, understanding, and knowledge of me to give me some sense of direction into adulthood. Soon I started having nightmares all linked to my fear of being left behind again. Over the years and with older mindset, I became an active dreamer. I would scream for my mother in my visions as I sensed a frightening presence approach me. Over time of dealing with these awful dreams, I developed an ability snap myself awake when the monster came close enough.

My grandparents noticed my distress. I slept for days, kept my appearance ragged, and barely ate anything. They urged me to do something I was passionate about. I went to school for nursing while working in a nursing facility not too far from home. I kept my mind busy, but I still ached for my mother. I was surrounded by several strong-minded individuals who wanted to guide me, yet nothing could beat the motivation from a parent. I didn't have a father and I didn't have a mother with me not in spirit but physically. I didn't even have any of my friends because they went their own separate paths in different states.

Later in life, I met a close friend by the name Jermaine. We bonded instantly and as we spent more and more time together I grew attached to him. He comforted me, gave me inspiration to keep moving on in life towards my goals. His advice was always what I needed in making the right decisions. I ended up having his child and named her Mckenzi. I assumed Jermaine was like the stereotypical male who fathered a child by accident; he would abandon me like my mother. I thought he would leave me alone to deal with another step into life and that was being a parent. He didn't however and continued to stand by my side.

By the time I was twenty years old, everything about my life was setting into place the way I wanted it. The fear that I couldn't live without my mother taking care of me diminished over time because I was a mother. I had security of a good job, great relationships, and tranquility within myself thanks to a forming relationship with God. I even had contact with my mother. She said it was extremely hard the first few months living in the new state, but she adjusted to the temperature she always desired and got on her feet. I was proud of her. I was happy she did take the leap of faith, but I still didn't understand why she moved in the first place when she could have made it a goal to visit the state every year.

One day I woke up and felt strange. The dreams were back once again. Strangely, there were different, but they had reoccurring aspects of them and were so vivid. I constantly dreamt of airplanes and each flight I missed and panicked because the destinations were to Florida. The planes would fly a short distance across the ocean. I stood at the beach of Lake Michigan watching the craft hover in the air and as I looked further out into the bed of water, I would see the skyline of the city of Orlando. The buildings were covered in jewels, the sky seemed brighter than where I was standing, and the water was even clear.

After dreaming, I sat in bed with this sensation of anxiety and it never went away throughout the day of my usual routine. Airplanes were on my mind. Whenever I looked up and seen one glide across the sky, I felt my spirit leave my body and soar with it. Every so often I would make it to Florida in my nigh visions. It's strange to declare when I awakened from those nights I felt high in spirits. When I didn't, my day was pretty much ruined before it really even got started.

One day I asked Jermaine what it meant.

“God is probably trying to tell you something.” He answered.

What is God trying to tell me? I pondered for months while living my repetitive life of eating and sleeping and working. The more I thought about it; God, my dreams that could have been visions into my future, and my life all together, the more I started feeling jittery like a drug addict. I couldn't sit still. If I did I assumed time was speeding up and I wasn't doing anything productive to better myself. Then I soon felt constricted in a routine life, so I broke away from home to do stupid, outrageous things. I searched areas trying to find something to fill a forming void in my life that suddenly appeared, but nothing worked. I tried everything from taking new classes and going to new events. I even attempted to make a new set of friends to expand myself. Unfortunately, somewhere in that timeframe I got into serious trouble and ended up losing custody of my daughter.

“I don't feel like going to work today.” I would whine this to Jermaine every morning before we left. “I don't feel like traveling during the snow twenty miles to work. I'm so tired of seeing that job. Why is my life like this?”

He listened to me complain about everything and knew I was becoming depressed. Sometimes I even vented to him about moving to Florida, the Sunshine State.

Declining in mentally, my body reacting with my mind and started shutting itself down. I lacked energy because I didn't eat. Sometimes I had minor panic attacks before going to bed. I couldn't stand having another dream that possibly could predict my future or frighten me so I drank alcohol to numb my mind and block the visions. On occasions, my breathing became short and I would start sweating with a fast heart rate. Life felt as if I was in a box that was slowly

shrinking on me. Outside that box, I heard gunshots because I lived in Chicago, it was summer, and danger came out of hibernation. Way too much was happening all around me and within me.

I called my mother after completely breaking down in the living room of my one-bedroom cluttered apartment. I explained to her while choking in tears how I felt like there was a monkey on my back whispering in my ear. It was telling me I was missing something in life and I will never have it because I was stuck where I was. She kindly told me that she felt the same way on the day she left for Florida. “You need a change.”

A change? So, I had to leave everything behind? Including my child like she did with me?

I didn't have custody Mckenzi, so the suggestion hit me hard in the chest. I could go on living without any meaning to my life. I could keep searching in hopes to find something to do that would give me a sense of purpose if I stayed in Chicago. Or I could do what she did and leave.

I looked at my daughter for days. I remembered that dream I had when I was her age. I didn't want her to dream the same thing I did. I didn't want her nightmares to put a fear of abandonment in her heart. Plus, what kind of mother would I be thought of? Only terrible mothers leave their children. I conflicted that thought with *I would be a terrible mother if I stayed and continue to show her how to give up on life*. I spoke with her father about leaving and he said he would take good care of his child, but why am I truly leaving? What is in Florida that I need and how far will I go? I understood that I was taking a giant leap of faith because I knew I had nothing but my mother out there. I didn't entirely trust her to help me, however I had to break free from the constricted feeling that tightened each day I lived in Chicago.

It was late October on the night I left for a new life. In the cold rain, I reflected on the moment my mother left me. Our last moment of eye contact. I kept my eyes down while I hugged my daughter and gave her money before I boarded the bus. I said goodbye through the window and allowed myself to cry for taking this huge leap of faith.

Two days later I finally reached the destination I kept dreaming about. That sickness I felt for days when I was eighteen unexpectedly came right back. I cried to my mother saying I miss my daughter. She told me she wept too when she last saw me five years ago. I did feel horrible at the fact that I practically abandoned Mckenzi at a tender age where she needed me the most, but I felt as if the box that surrounded me finally opened and gave me room to breathe. I really needed the change of atmosphere.

“It hurt me that day when I left you.” My mother told me. “But I knew you were going to come to me. Just trust her father and she will come back to you like you came back to me.”

I’m still expecting my daughter to come live with me soon. I will be a different person. A stronger and confident mother. Every weekend I communicate with her and tell her she is my everything. Every day I pray she is protected and every minute of my life I think where I would have been if I didn’t face my fears and follow my mother’s example.