

One of the biggest mysteries among my friends is why my mother's Suburban has a handicapped license plate. When asked, I usually reply, "I don't want to be a downer, but I had a sister who died when I was young," fairly nonchalantly. They always give me the same blank stare back, wondering why this has never been brought up. I have always been the kid who looks at the glass half-full, but it took me a long time to accept the fact that I had a sister I barely ever knew, but yet one that I learned so many of life's lessons from at such an early age.

Thinking back, I'm lying in bed, with my sister, Mollie Sara Margolis, who has been diagnosed with Tay-Sachs. I, being barely old enough to walk at the time, obviously had no idea what this was or what it meant, but what I did know was that at that moment in time, she was having trouble breathing, and I needed to help. I run, screaming, to go get the machine (suction) to help her. My parents have no idea what just happened until they heard me fall down carrying this cumbersome object (for a two year-old, I might add). The only thing I knew at that point in time was there was someone who needed help, and I needed to be the one to do it.

This is something that still sticks with me today, and I am so thankful for it. I am a true believer in the philosophy that everything in life happens for a reason, and if that I am able to help, I should. This is something I learned at a very young age from my sister, and that I can take with me for the rest of my life.

Today, I am certified as a lifeguard, CPR certified, and trained in first aid. I have volunteered at places like the Crayola Factory, an educational facility for younger children. On a different level, I am a coach in football, hockey, lacrosse, water-skiing, and knee boarding. If I can help someone, I can, and will, on any level of life. I think that this is something very important to make our world a better place, something that I have taken away from my experience with my sister, Mollie.

Losing a sister is not something that can just be passed off, but I cannot bring her back to life, nor will I be able to see her or talk to her again. She lived for over four years, and with those four years of her life, and the lives of all of those who are diagnosed and touched by Tay-Sachs, we must take from them what they gave to us. As the old cliché goes, "don't live life through the rear-view mirror." Rather, live, learn and look forward.

Unfortunately, with such a short essay I can't discuss the many ways Mollie has touched me, but I can say how she affected my life's philosophy. It could be stated as, "If you can help, help. Most importantly, never dwell on the loss, but learn from those whose lives have touched you."

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