



Perfectly Normal

Here's the story behind the ninth www.Keys2Heaven.com song, leading up to release of *Stories of Faith: 12 Songs Inspired by You!*

By Michael Biasini

I would like to say that I was a "perfectly normal," healthy baby, ready to take on the world. But instead, I was born with multiple deformities. My eyes were on the sides of my head, and I had holes where my nose was supposed to be. I had a club foot and was missing toes. Also, three of my fingers were missing. A cleft palate had an opening in my top lip and extended all the way to the right eye. Unfortunately, even one leg was shorter than the other.

The hospital staff, I was told, thought I had too many problems to survive. The doctors, in fact, refused to show me to my parents and, incredulously, even gave my parents forms to sign to "give me up for science."

I can only thank God that my parents had other plans for my life. I belonged to them and to God. They intended to love and accept me just as I was, despite acknowledging that it would be a long, hard road ahead.

When I began school, I was placed in a special-education classroom. Aside from being labeled a "special-ed" kid, I endured constant ridicule from other students who called me "stupid," "ugly" and "retarded" because of my looks.

A milestone in fourth grade was the "miracle" that my parents and I had longed for. I was selected to undergo a surgery that would resculpt my entire face with bone grafts. The surgery was life-threatening and lasted ten hours. I survived this operation, my eighteenth, which really changed my life.

While I now faced a new chapter in my life from a physical perspective, I hadn't seen the end of my trials. Within the next few years, my mother developed cancer and died, but not before instilling in me a sense of worth and the determination never to give up.

These words eventually impacted my life when I decided on a career. In fact, my *Perfectly Normal*

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father advised, "Mike, you would make a great special-ed teacher." I knew what it was like to be a special-ed child.



I now teach in the same school district as my wife. My classroom is a kaleidoscope of children with special needs - emotional, physical and mental. I love to see my students' smiling faces when they learn something new.

I've now gone through twenty-nine surgeries. While many have brought a lot of pain to my life, the fact that I have survived them all only seems to reiterate to me that God has a purpose for my life. I see my purpose being fulfilled one child at a time.

I may not have been a "perfectly normal" healthy baby, but thanks to God and to people like my mom. The motto she gave me will always be the motto I use in my own classroom: Never give up.

Michael submitted this story exclusively for Keys2Heaven. A longer version originally appeared in A 6th Bowl of Chicken Soup for the Soul (Copyright, 1998).

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www.Keys2Heaven.com
Info@Keys2Heaven.com