

How Anxiety Hits You

Character-building is tough.

I watched my son trudge to the van after last-minute complaints about feeling sick. Upon further interrogation questioning, he confessed, "School is too long." And the sore tummy became more than the stomach flu.

Mommy's diagnosis: anxiety.

Which I totally understand. But at that moment, I had to make a quick decision, and my decision was that my sweet 5-year-old had to go to school, armed with a plastic bag in case he threw up on the trip.

While I watched my son make his sad march to the van, I remembered the feeling of dread when I used to go to work early in the morning and wouldn't get home until my kids were tucked into bed. How I felt when I was living to survive instead of living my dream.

Do you feel this way?

Do you ever have a pit in your stomach when you have to get up in the morning? Do you feel like you have to just survive the next day? Week? Year? Do you wish you could just graduate high school, then graduate college so life could begin? Do you wish you could stop working at your menial job so you could pursue your passions?

When anxiety hits, take a deep breath, say a prayer, and keep moving forward.

Sometimes we have seasons of our life where we have to suck it up and go to class. Go to work. Get a job. Go to school. Even if it's really long. And God is waiting with open arms when we succeed in overcoming our anxiousness.

Letting my son stay home this morning would have taught him how to take the easy way out. That an upset tummy means mommy lets him relax in bed with books and Legos. That he doesn't have to suck it up when his little world gets to be a little much for him.

And while I watched my little boy walk to his daddy, who was waiting at the van, I knew that this was a lesson we needed to teach him. One he needed to learn so that he'll be able to keep going when he wants to stop.

It didn't keep me from sobbing to my husband, Justin, on the phone after he dropped off the kids. Overanalyzing my decision led to wild thoughts of my son feeling like I let him down. But I know that if he gets sick at school, we can go pick him up. And just how God opens His arms to hold us when we can't quite make it, I'm ready to cuddle my little boy and tuck him into bed.

However, if my instincts are right about his anxious tummy, he will be the better for sticking it out during a long school day. And I'll be waiting for him when he gets home with open arms.

*Five months after winning the Florida Christian Writers Conference 2012 Writer of the Year award, **Bethany Jett** signed contracts with the MacGregor Literary Agency and Regal Publishing. Her debut book, The Cinderella Rule, hit bookstores in April 2013.*