

Sometimes You Just Need to Lose Control

My brother and I have done a few (*cough cough* that may be an understatement) crazy things in our childhood. Teenage years introduced me to the back of his motorcycle where my eye lids flipped inside out with such high rates of speed (with no helmet, imagine that), or his first truck that he tweaked to go faster than snot on a glass door knob, where we would set the cruise control at ungodly rates of speed and swap positions as the driver. I better not name any more incidents lest I am forever disowned by my mother.

Before our teenage years, our choices weren't QUITE so dangerous. More like tying our bike handlebars together and nearly killing ourselves, or making arrows with gasoline soaked corn cobs on the ends and shooting blazing fire into the woods, or playing games of throwing mama's butcher knives into the ground at each other's feet and seeing how close we could get without shedding blood. (Which brings me to the time that he put strawberry Nestle Quick in his mouth and let it run down his chin so our mom would think he was dying and bleeding from his mouth, but on to the moral of the story ...)

One of the things we would try to do is stand somewhere, from any height (preferably dangerous) and challenge each other to fall and not use our hands to catch ourselves or break the fall. It was a mind game, like keeping your eyes open when you sneeze, and honestly, I never remember either of us ever winning out.

No matter if we were just standing on the ground, or from the back of a truck, we could never prove our control by keeping our arms by our sides. It never worked. It was just too natural to fling our hands out to protect ourselves before smashing our faces into the ground and winning the title of

kid champion.

Now that I'm grown, I seem to be playing the same game. Life has yielded me good things and life has yielded me bad things (many of those things were just effects of my bad choices), but nevertheless, I've lived through lots of each. I've lost many things that were very dear to me and from this pain, I transformed into a very controlling person.

Now stop here. When I think controlling person, my first thought is Cruella DeVille on *101 Dalmatians* (a movie I've actually seen, shocker!). With her long pointy finger and her ratty hair, she controls everything around her for her own gain. Well ... there's more to control than that. I've never been a mean person, never ever longed to see someone else hurt, never wished ill on a single soul or taken revenge in order to make sure things go my way.

There's a side of control that's a lot softer. There's a side of control that whispers in love instead of screaming in fury. The side of control that grabs the reins when life starts going the opposite way and tries to make everything better.

I dare say this level of control is just as dangerous. This is what I've dealt with for years. Dreams would land in my hands and as they'd start to filter through my fingers, I'd grasp my fist tighter, trying desperately to hold on to what was most important to me. It never worked.

Time after time, as my fist grasped around my dreams, my fingers suffocated the hope, only to kill it faster. I knew to relax, to trust God with my future, but just like free falling face first from the back of a truck, I couldn't keep my hands from extending, protecting myself in a defensive position.

Here I am, 30+ years later and I still have dreams. Some dreams land in my hands and some dreams slip through my fingers. While my heart feels no difference, I'm learning to open my palm. When I feel the hope sifting through, away from

my reach ... not to grasp harder, not to extend my own energy to protect my hope, but to bravely open my palm. To trust that any desire I manipulate by control, even for the best reasons, will never be truly mine. It'll be something I forced to happen or take place. However! Any dream that I hold in an open palm will be one that God can control instead of my own suffocating grip.

I may have failed the challenge of crashing my face into the ground as a kid with no defenses, but I'm not continuing to fail. When my fist tightens and my heart longs as dreams and hopes land in my grasp, I've made the painful choice to take my fingers that want to hold tight and force them to extend into an open palm, trusting God that His ways are better than mine and one day, one day ... those hopes will be fulfilled because I trusted in God more than my own grip.

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