

My Hidden Questioned Life

Everyone has something to hide. Is mine that noticeable?

By: Suzanne

From the day I started kindergarten to about fourth grade, I hid part of my life from my friends, a spastic bladder. I am not sure how this came to be; all I remember is the many urinary infection after urinary infection that happened as a toddler.

The beginning and medical side

As a young girl in my toddler years, I was very engaged in different activities. I had two older siblings who kept me busy, they would play many different games that I enjoyed watching. Being as engaged and busy as I was, I began hold my urine when had the urge to go to the restroom, this causing my bladder to expand and contract just like my lungs inhale and exhale, all along training my body. Being as young as I was, I did not understand the major medical conditions behind my routine. Eventually, the bladder would have to empty. So I found myself wetting my pants unexpectedly.

By the time I was in kindergarten I realized that most kids had their body under control, but I didn't. My parents tried to do everything to help me, taking me to specialist after specialist.

Since my bladder was trained to contract then empty unexpectedly, I had to re-train myself to fully empty, when I wanted. The doctors had many plans for me. They would ask to use the restroom to empty my bladder, then they would do a thing, which my mom and I called a "jelly belly". The doctors squirted jelly on

my belly and took an ultrasound, of my bladder. All through this time I got many infections, which meant more medicine and pills.

“ ‘You smell like fish,’ the boy smirked, I tried to ignore him as my mind ticked for an excuse.”

But then the doctors got worried about other parts of my body such as my kidneys and my colon; so the new thing was pooping every day. I had many doctors, and each doctor seemed to have the same plan

The Endless plans

In kindergarten at the private school, the student teacher would guide me to the restroom, but I was heading in to a public elementary school for first grade... I did not hide my medical conditions; my parents and I met with the teacher we all agreed on a plan. Soon after, the student teacher shared it with the class so I would not get funny questions. I was allowed to use the special teacher bathroom since it was more accessible. I was able to pick a friend to share it with, and together we decorated it with pictures of us, and posted my tracking sheet of my medical activities. I got a fake dollar if I followed my program,

which I kept in a little box on my desk. At the end of the week, a report was sent home. If the report was a good one we would keep it, once I had 4 of those, I earned the Barbie that sat on top of the cupboards. I never think I earned that Barbie. So instead we moved on to a new plan.

I had to wear a watch that beeped to tell me to go use the restroom. One day during quiet drawing time it beeped and the girl across from me said, "She has to go pee." The whole class snickered except my best friend. Unnoticed by the teacher, I got up averting all eyes and went to the bathroom with all eyes upon me.

" It's been hard to hide part of my life from my friends, but there are just something's you have to keep to yourself,"

In second grade, I kept the secret to myself though I got many questions from the kids who were in my first grade class. Then another heavy thing fell on my shoulders. Girls started to have sleepover's that I was invited too. I made little progress during the day, but at night I wasn't even close. The doctors thought it was best to work really hard on the day. My parent tried to convince me to wear an ugly watch that vibrated, but it was so big and was not something I was committed to.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

The watch that I wore

In third grade, the teacher I had was more understanding than I could have ever hoped. She understood me not wanting to wear the watch, so she offered to wear it. Whenever it vibrated, she would find me, and shake her watch hand. Some of the observant kids asked me questions, but I had many excuses ready. I improved over that year tremendously.

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Nothing special was done in fourth grade. It was all up to me. Sometimes I came off the bus with a sweatshirt around my waist, to hide the wet spot on my pants. Or when had to go to the restroom, but felt as if I couldn't make it , I would crouch down and pretended to tie my laces.

Through all the plans and the doctors, I have gone through. There is one I will never forget, Dawn Sandelchidi.

Dawn Sandalcidi

I met Dawn Sandalcidi in the middle of 3rd grade. I told her I didn't like the watch and she never talked about it again. She told me that the longer I waited, the less chance of ever getting better. She gave me facts, instead of the same plans that never worked. She helped me strengthen my pelvic floor so I would not leak during the day. In 6 months I was almost completely dry all day. Every month or so I would have leak,. When I did my parents knew I had an infection and it was time for more antibiotics.

Mid-way through fourth grade I was becoming more desperate to become dry all night. Dawn told me facts about my conditions. She said that at the age of 9 about 10% of the kids in your class are not yet dry all night. Dawn devised this plan to wake up every night at a certain time. After a week of being dry we would bump the time up. Slowly I became dry all night. By the end of fourth grade I considered myself fixed.

Emotions

All through my medical problem, I had bumps and embarrassments. People made fun of the way I smelled, and they pointed out all the missing school I made up excuses such as the dentist, and while I was really going to the doctors, always feeling alone. At some points of my life I didn't want to go on. But my parents and Dawn pulled me through. My parents thought it best to get emotional help when I wanted to quit., Those meetings just made everything worse. I felt like I had to act like the dumb people in the movies because of the way I was treated. My teachers always taught me to go my own

way, but I always wanted to be someone else.

Even though I know it is over, I feel as if I am scared for life, with a burden. Even though this nine year experience has made me more sensitive to others health. I still keep the secret to myself because of those few immature insensitive peoples who will make fun of my interesting past, to my face or behind my back with others. I hope that the people who read this won't be that boy in fourth grade that told me I smelled like fish or that girl from first grade who made fun of my efforts to have a normal life.

Sometimes, I wonder if I would have ever had gotten better, without Dawn. I wish I met her earlier. She was more than a doctor. From that day I met her to I've always wanted to grow up and become a famous doctor who does what she does.

“I have an dentist appointment”

“I fell in gross green mud”



For me my life was always a question mark.

