

Photograph memory

There's a vast photograph hidden under my bed. A photo with a deep brown frame and faded yellow edges that always made my tears slide down to my cheeks.

I am in the photo dressed up in a dark blue dress; my uncle is in the photo holding up my baby cousin, my mum and dad are in the photo making a fake smile, my sister is in the photo staring at her own small feet.

But at that moment, we didn't know that she would fly away.

She flew away without her favourite doll. She flew away without no one noticing. She flew away without telling me. With no warnings, no signs, no goodbyes, she just left us like the wind. With her substantial white wings, she hugged us tightly with her last strength and flapped her wings to fly away. Then closed her eyes. So peacefully, so quietly, with her favourite flower bouquet clasped between her small hands.

I didn't realize she left us until my grandma started to weep softly. I thought my sister was sleeping. But it was more than just sleeping. She was becoming a sleeping beauty but without the magical kiss from the prince.

Since then, the photograph with my family and sister has become my best friend. I took out the photo, trying to make sure no one knows that I am looking at it. If my mum saw me, she would take the photo away from me. She thinks hiding the truth, ignoring the past will make me feel better. But it is not valid. When I take out the photo and whisper to it, my sister responds. I tell her that I miss her; I tell her I want her to come back; I tell her that everyone needs her. But her response is always the same. She looks at her feet. If it's a lucky day, I could spot her looking at my feet. Or my parents' feet.

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My family says I have to move on. But what does it mean? Ignore everything? Hide everything? Put my memory with my sister into a small box and lock it forever? No. That's not happening. Never. Ever. I was sure not thinking about my sister will make me hurt more.

I still remember that day, when my sister was dragged into the ambulance with an oxygen mask on her mouth as if she is a dangerous dog and needs those horrible dog muzzles. They closed the ambulance door, and that was my last-and only-vivid memory of my sister.

Now I wish I have never seen her going to the hospital. When I try to think of happy memories with her, the only memory that pops out in my mind is when my sister is in the ambulance and me standing outside, watching the ambulance door close in front of me with a loud slam. Memories give you joy, but it also gives you pain, as well as fear.

For the next couple of months, my memories crushed me completely. They dragged me down into the black hole of memories. The picture of my family and sister whirled around my mind and my body. I stopped eating; I stopped talking; I didn't do anything. I just stayed in my gloomy room, looking at the photograph. I couldn't believe people outside could be laughing, playing and having fun. My sister is gone. People shouldn't be happy. They should all be sad, dark and depressed.

My parents called a psychology doctor to have a 'chat' with me. Now my parents must have thought I have gone mad! I told them I don't need to have a 'chat' but they called the doctor anyway. The doctor was an old man with thick black glasses and sparkling bald head. He was wearing a black suit that seemed a little tight for him. He couldn't even button his last jacket button!

He kept on asking me questions that I expected. But I haven't answered anything until he got mad at me and stormed out of my house.

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My parents gave me a long boring lecture about me having to move on, for my sister and me. Then they left my room. Saying that they will give me some time to gather my thoughts. Of course, I wasn't going to think about it, but the phrase 'for my sister' convinced me. I started thinking about moving on for quite a long time. I changed my view and began to feel a small light coming out from me again. Now, I know the meaning of 'moving on'. And came up with these three conclusions:

Moving on doesn't mean I hide from what happened. It means I keep those memories in my heart.

Moving on means to think positively. To think that my sister is happy where she is now, with no regrets.

Moving on means to think logically. (This one took me a lot of time to admit.) It doesn't mean that if I'm keep thinking of my sister, something incredible is going to happen. So, there is no point of looking at the negative side or being upset. It is for my good. For my sister's good. For everyone around Me's good.

By learning this, I could finally be myself again.

There's a vast photograph that used to be hidden under my bed. But not anymore. A photo with a deep brown frame and faded yellow edges will stay in my heart forever, smiling brightly with happy memories.

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