



## Road to Triumph

*By Joseph A.*

My life began in East York, Canada between the hours of 4.00 – 5.00 p.m on a day in December 1994. I was the first born of my mother at the time and my mother wanted to keep it so by getting her tubes tied. Although I only spent the first two years of my life in Canada, there is a whole lot my family constantly chat about, especially how I have the same birthday as my oldest brother Timothy.

While still being a baby my mother and three older brothers travelled along with me to Colorado, the 'mile-high' state of the U.S.A. Over there my family began life again from a new pint and it was also from that time my mom and dad began to build an undying tension between each other.

Though I couldn't remember most of my early days, one thing that I do remember and will never forget was my parents' divorce which occurred when I was only four years old. Though I had no idea at the time the intensity of what was going on, I feel the shock now that I've grown up and remember all the fights between my parents and the times I would see them both cry, especially when my dad would have to sleep on the living room couch.

After their divorce, my mom got custody of me and my brother, but I would always go with two of my brothers, Emmanuel, the second born, and Daniel the third born to visit my dad on weekends. The first born never except once went with us to visit our dad because my father disowned him in the course of his side with my mother which built a hatred between him doing side my mother and my father.

As time passed, my parents and older brother started using me, the youngest one of us all as a vessel to pass hatred and pain towards each other, and of the true fact, I subconsciously brewed hatred and dark feelings within me which would in time start to engulf me if care wasn't taken.

A year after my parents' divorce, I began schooling in Denver, Colorado where we were staying. At that time I didn't realise it but at that time, the foundation of my success was laid. During that period of my life, my family were all trying to implant their respective views and attitudes into me. My mother wanted me to achieve what she couldn't by becoming a doctor, my oldest brother Tim a former member of the Blood gang and an underground rapper, my second and third oldest brothers who I was not attached to at the time were greatly talented in art, and I personally wanted to follow them but my father gave me the best advice of all, which was never follow any man, but look down into my heart, look up to God and look forward, that only then would I find my true destiny.

Although my mom wanted more than anything to sever me from my father, my father and I still had a great bond, and he always gave me good advice, although he too was polluting my mind about my mother.

I always saw both of my parents to be great my father always motivated me and gave me good advice, and my mother took excellent and unrivalled care for me by providing me with all my wants and needs, including contacting my father no matter how much she hated the idea.

As time passed, several events occurred including my moms biggest and fattest of all lies. My mom knew me to be the type she couldn't force to do anything, and realising this characteristic of mine, my mom had to trick me before she could get me to do a lot of things. This time round, on Valentine's day of the year 2000, my mum booked a flight to Ghana, which she planned to bring both me and my brother Daniel on.

I could assume that she instantly knew we would never willingly go if she asked us to, so instead, she deceived us into thinking we were going to Canada – My brother Daniel immediately knew it was a lie because he knew my mom to be the type who would tell us about such things before hand but I was completely fooled and overjoyed by her plan. Whilst I was jubilating, my brother in a disturbed mood just said to me, "Joseph, do not be deceived." I took no heed to his words that he would constantly repeat after every hour until we reached our final destination.

Finally! I said to myself as our last plane landed. After a safe landing, my mom, Daniel and I made it to the exit only to be welcomed by a blast of heat which was ironically at sun down. In shock I looked at my mother and asked, "Mom! Why is Canada so hot?!!" Then and there, she told me we were in Ghana, an African country. I suddenly felt a great fear due to the ignorant perception we were made to believe of Africa back when we were in America.

I heard of mosquitoes the size of dogs that can drain a child of all their blood at a go, and that people live in the wilderness with wild beasts. I instantly began to panic, then my brother calmed me down with a pat on the shoulder and said. "Don't worry, Joey, it won't be too bad, but I just told you, do not be deceived.

After that we were a bit calm but negotiated that no chaos would occur as long as we didn't have to go to school, and my mom, knowing the type of people we were had no choice but to comply.

Daniel and I eventually began to love it here until our mom ditched us and left one evening while my brother and I had no choice but to stay. Though we hated her at first we came to terms with reality and moved on even though our memories were still a heavy load on us. After three months, in Ghana, my auntie's son Eric convinced us to go to school, and we finally complied with the idea of Ghanaian education.

After one term of education, my brother and I were sent back to the USA. At first, it was a shock to go back for me personally but after reaching the airport I was overfilled with joy and leave and see my family again.

After going through a transit with the aid of various flight attendants at different stations across the globe, we finally reached New York where we were to meet our mom and continue our journey to Denver, Colorado. At the exit of the airport, Daniel myself as well as a crowd of other people were to meet up with family, friends and escorts to take us to our various destinations. As within a few minutes most of the people we came with had departed, and not too long after, Daniel and I were virtually alone and began to become sad and worried.

Suddenly, we saw movement within the crowds, as if someone was rushing out in front. At that moment, my mom burst out of the crowd with her hand bag looking in all directions to see us. Though I could tell it was her and I instantly knew she was in search of us, the sight of her filled me with so much joy that I froze and had all my words locked in my mouth. Finally she made eye contact with me and ran towards me and Daniel shouting out, "Kwaku, Akwasi!!"

At home, I saw my brother Timothy, my aunty Felicia as well as some of my old friends. Then I felt an emptiness within me when I realised that my brother Emmanuel had left my mom's side to stay with my father which made me able to finally deduce my mother's real reason for bring us to Ghana. Soon afterwards, I also discovered that our return to the USA was the work of our father whom had allegedly taken my mom to court for bringing us to Ghana without his consent and also claimed that we were living in the wilderness and surviving off of wild animals and stream water.

Though we (Daniel and myself) found this farfetched, we never bothered investigating at least I didn't because I know my parents to be the type that always put words in each other's mouths. Not too long after returning to America, Daniel and I continued our elementary education, I was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade at the time that we began reaping the fruits of our stay in Ghana with our grandparents, Rev. M. and his wife at the church.

While we were there, we excelled in our academics, thus reflecting the benefits of being in Ghana, and our general reasoning as well as intellect had quite surpassed most of our peers, this we owed solely to God, and his servant Rev. M., my grandfather. During our return, though things had changed, it didn't take too long for things to seem normal and Emmanuel eventually came back to stay with us, but after one year was sent to stay in Ghana and has not returned ever since.

A year after Emma had come, Daniel, myself as well as my oldest brother came back to stay in Ghana. Upon our return we were met by our aunty Theresa whom we had met in our last stay where we found out she was my mother's little sister. The next day we left Accra for Kumasi and made our first stop at the house of our grandfather whom we refer to as Nana Dapaa whom is the older brother of Rev. M. and is also the family head.

From Nana Dapaa's household, we went to visit Emmanuel whom was with the Reverend. When we reached the Reverend's residence, we met a transformed, inspiring reborn Emmanuel who was so overjoyed to see us again. At the time, I thought everything was perfect now that we were together, but little did I know what was ahead of me.

From that point on, I had a new guardian other than the Reverend whom was our first guardian in our first time staying. Our new guardian was initially aggressive and quite verbally abusive, but as time passed and I went through so many psychological and even spiritual changes, I overcame the troubles and became the champion I am now.

Now at age 17, almost 18, I see everything in the past as stepping stones to triumph, and I realized the truth in the saying "that which cannot kill you, can only make you stronger." And that no matter how hard a situation may be, no condition is permanent.

THE END