



Rocky Road to Success

By Isaac M.

It all began in the latter part of April 2010. I was grounded for staying out late with a couple of friends the previous weekend without permission. This wasn't anything new to me due to the fact that I got grounded at least once a month because I normally stayed out late past curfew. Normally my dad would send me to my room and take my phone away for a whole week. When this happened I would just sulk around the house this made my dad more angry.

It was during the last week of April when I finished writing my mid-term exams, I knew I was grounded and was supposed to come home straight after school, but because I had just finished writing my exams I thought my father would pardon me. So without even calling to inform him I went to my friend's house to hang out. Unfortunately, when I finally got home things went quite the opposite. He was fuming. He started talking to me but this time it sounded like he was fed up. I didn't really mind because I thought I would just get grounded for a week. After my phone was seized I stormed into my room and began sulking. I sulked myself to sleep and intended to carry on sulking the next day.

I woke up the next day intending to spend the whole day in my room but my dad barged in whilst I was listening to music and told me to get dressed because he was taking me out. I felt so nervous because I knew my dad wasn't happy with me and going out with him meant we were going to have the 'long talk'. My dad drove for about half an hour then suddenly parked the car and said to me, "Isaac, I'm not going to beat around the bush but I'll tell you straight up. You're going to stay with your aunt in France for a bit." I was speechless. This is when I started to feel like I had really let my dad down. I felt heartbroken, like a contagious disease they were trying to get out of the house. My dad told me that it was for my own good and that I needed to clear my head. But I knew he was just trying to make me feel better. I

didn't say anything until we got home. And as soon as we got home I went to my room and started to pack.

I couldn't even say 'bye' to my friends because my phone had been seized. I felt like a total failure. The flight to France was mind boggling. So many thoughts ran through my mind. 'How would my auntie treat me? Would she think I'm a bad boy? How long was I even going to be there?' I was confused and I felt betrayed.

I stayed in France for about a month. During that time, I missed my family very much, but I also started thinking about the unfair things I had done to my family especially my Dad. My auntie treated me very kindly and we did a lot of counseling. We talked about my feelings and what I would change if I had the chance. It really helped me clear my mind.

One morning my auntie called me from my room and told me that I had a visitor waiting for me in the living room. I was quite surprised because I didn't know anyone in France apart from my auntie and her family. So I cautiously walked into the living room to see my dad sitting on the sofa smiling. As soon as he saw me he immediately got up and embraced me. I had missed my father's hugs. He asked me the usual questions about how I was doing and what had happened in the past month. I told him everything was fine and that I was ready to go back home. My dad then looked at me in a way which told me that he had something to say. He turned to me and said "Isaac, I will be going to Ghana for a month and I want you to come with me," Of course I didn't have a choice so I just agreed to go with him. 'If passing through Ghana was the only way to get back to London then so be it,' I thought.

The flight to Ghana was long and never ending. When I got off the plane an atmosphere of heat and humidity slapped me in the face. I then thought to myself "wow I can't believe I'm back in Ghana. But although Ghana's first impression wasn't welcoming, it did bring back cherished memories.

I was born in Ghana in October 1995. I lived with my mum and dad until I was two. My mum and dad split up and my dad took me with him and left my baby brother with my mum. (Well so I was told, I was too young to remember or understand anything at the time). I lived with my dad until I was about six, when he got married to my step mum we started living together. It was okay. I never really missed my real mum because I was very young when I left her so I didn't really remember anything. But I did go and visit her from time to time. I lived in North Kaneshie with my dad and step mum until I was approximately nine years, when we moved to London. My grades were good, I had a lot of friends and everything was going on smoothly. All until I went to secondary school where I got the tendency of going out and staying out late, past curfew. I think that is how I

probably ended up in Ghana but my dad always says he always wanted me to attend boarding school in Ghana and that it was part of the plan.

My dad told me that I would be going to Mfantshipim Senior High School, not long after we arrived at my Grandmother's house. I was extremely shocked when he told me. Originally, he told me I was accompanying him on a month's trip, and now he was telling me that I was coming to school in Ghana for three years. I felt like I had been lied to.

The only thing I was looking forward to when I came to Ghana was seeing my mother again. My dad took me to see her a week after we arrived in Ghana. She was very shocked and at the same time overjoyed when she saw me. She didn't know we were back in Ghana so it was quite a surprise for her. The first hug we shared was heart melting. For the first time I saw Ghana as a home and not just where I used to live. Being reunited with my mother was an incredible experience.

I started living with my mother when my dad went back to London. We didn't really spend much time together since I was in boarding school, so we made the most out of the little time we got together. Initially, she was very overprotective because I just started living with her, but eventually, after a lot of sweet talking she loosened up a bit. I always complained to my mum about how I didn't like boarding school and that I wanted to move schools. I also used to tell her how I missed the rest of my family in London. I only spoke to them on the weekends over the phone. (which made me miss them even more)

After a couple of months in boarding school I got used to the whole system. Personally I thought I had settled in well but I couldn't wait to go back to London to see my dad. My dad had promised me that I would come and visit during the Christmas holidays so I just couldn't wait.

I arrived in London for my brief visit December 19, 2011. I was only going to spend three weeks in London so I wanted to squeeze everything I wanted to do into my tight schedule. I could see the excitement in my dad's face when he picked me up from Heathrow airport. We reminisced about old times the whole way home. I felt so welcome.

During my stay in London I had a lot of talks with my dad. Since I am the oldest he always gave me advice on how to set a good example for the younger ones. This wasn't really new to me due to the fact that since the age of thirteen my dad started telling me that I was becoming a man and that I needed to set a good example for my younger siblings. The only different thing this time was that he told me about the extreme things he used to do when he was younger. He also told me that I should never forget that he was there for me and that if I ever needed anything

all I had to do was call him. This made me feel I was important and trustworthy. My dad and I spent a lot of time together. It felt like he was trying to summarise all the advice he had for me before I got back to Ghana. He made sure I never forgot the word responsibility.

When it was finally time to come back to Ghana I was extremely sad. I knew that my dad and I had so much more to talk about but it would have to wait until the next time. It even surprises me to say that for a minute I even wanted to cry. I knew I could call on him and that we could still talk, but talking over the phone is no way comparable to face-to-face discussions.

The minute I got off the plane in Ghana on January 13, 2011 I already started missing him. I promised myself that I would take into consideration everything he said to me because I know that is what would have made him happy. I still and will always miss my dad but doing what he tells me to do just makes me feel much better.

If I am to compare how I feel now to how I felt when I first came to Ghana, I think I have made progress. Interestingly, I feel like Ghana is home and London is my second home. I have settled in well and made new friends. If I get the choice of going back to stay in London I think it would take me some time to make a decision.

My life so far has been rocky, moving from place to place. But I at least know what they mean when they say "You don't know what you have until you lose it!"

THE END