

Beauty

Beauty is one of life's greatest gifts. There is nothing that could ever replace it. Beauty is found in unexpected places, unique friends, or unforgettable moments that tend to take our breath away.

My days never start off the way I plan. I always end up rushing off to do whatever task I have to accomplish that day. Saturday mornings seem to be the only days that I get to relax and enjoy myself. About six months ago, I found a place where I could ignore the world and find peace and harmony. After I crawl out of bed and get dressed, I drive down to the beach and take a walk on the sand. While I am at the beach, I find that the rest of the world seems to disappear. It is almost like I am inside a bubble where nothing can touch me. I don't hear the cars driving by or see the people walking next to me. Instead of all the chaos, I hear the sound of the waves crashing on the seashore, I see the clouds moving with the wind, and I smell the salty seawater. This reminds of the scene from City of Angels where all of the guardian angels are standing on the beach waiting for the sun to rise. As the sun rises, smiles of peace and harmony appear on their faces showing that they have a warm feeling inside. I never thought that the beach would be a place where I could find such beauty so close to home. All I had to do was walk, and beauty was there in front of me.

Another example of beauty is found in my friends. My friends are very close to me. I never had to worry about my friends taking advantage of me or worrying about them disappearing when I needed them the most. My closest friend has always been my sister,

CeLyna. She is two years younger than me but has more wisdom than anyone else I know. I can talk to her about anything and know that she will not judge me, but instead, she would help me to move forward in any situation. She is someone who has beauty shining through her actions, words, and thoughts. I remember when I had to tell her that I was pregnant with my first daughter. I was so scared about what my family would say or how they might judge me. I picked her up from school and told her I was taking her to get something to eat. We went to Taco Bell, and as we sat down with our food, I began to get so nervous that I began to cry. She hugged me and asked what was wrong. As I began to explain my situation, she got tears in her eyes and then hugged me with a smile. As she pulled away, she said, "I'm going to be an aunt!" When I shared my concern about the family, she said, "Don't worry about them. As long as you are happy, then who cares what they might think or say?" She loved me enough to assure me that my daughter was the best thing ever, even if in my heart, I knew rough times were ahead. As we sat there with our bean and cheese burritos, tacos, and nachos, I knew her beauty is not just on the outside, but comes from the heart, and CeLyna is the best example of this type of beauty.

Finally, on Thanksgiving of 2005, my grandmother passed away after a two-year battle with cancer. During those two years, my now 7 year-old daughter, Danielle, would spend every moment with my grandmother. My parents and grandparents lived on the same property, so when we would visit my grandmother, Danielle would refer to her as "Grandma in the Front House." We all thought it was a cute nickname, and we always understood who she was talking about. Danielle would try to take care of her and spend time reading to her, talking to her, or even just watching television with her. Due to all the treatments, my grandmother's physical beauty began to disappear. My grandmother began to lose weight; at times, it would seem like 10 pounds a week, and she also began to lose color in her skin because she could not go into the sun due to her chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

We all saw my grandmother getting worse and worse, knowing that it was only a matter of time before we had to say goodbye. One day, while she was reading to my grandmother, Danielle turned to her and said, “Grandma in the Front House, you are beautiful.” She did not see the hair loss from the chemo and radiation treatments, the bruises from the doctor’s needles, or the bags under her eyes from sleepless nights. Instead, my daughter saw a woman who listened to her great-granddaughter’s story of the “Three Little Pigs” for the hundredth time, even with all the pain and suffering she was enduring. And so, Danielle saw beauty when she saw my grandmother.

Overall, inner beauty is what makes a person. We should remember that beauty comes from the heart, and in turn, is passed on, with love, to others. As Emily Dickinson said, “Beauty is not caused. It is.”