

THE CALL THAT SAVED MY LIFE

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(A severe heart attack almost flung me into an embrace of death. My survival story happened five years ago when I was 300km away from my home and in one late at night. It is a narrative where I remember and express my gratitude to my childhood friend and classmate Kosaraju Padma who saved my life at that critical moment).

The bitter taste in my mouth of the episode is as poignant today as it was five years ago. It was January 26th, 2014, and wasnâ??t a good day for me. It reminds me of the nightmarish memory of my life.

It seized a quiet day of mine as my heart took a severe pounding. Pain spread searing from inside; chest heavily bobbed that I couldnâ??t speak. For few hours frighteningly left oscillating by gossamer threads of survival. Finally, I got rescued by a benevolent, friendly soul.

January 26th has a historical significance in Indian Independence chapter. It was the day India was declared as a republic when the Constitution came into effect in 1950.

Never to forget, the day also has a providential significance in my life. The day I got greeted a brief â??helloâ?? by an angel of death.

A severe heart-attack hit me with all its deadly force. Had I not paid quick attention to that hurricane, my final breath would have shelved five years ago.

Those were the days when Iâ??m drifting through hard times.

I say miseries come in series; days passed like pointed barbs, unfair and oppressive; legal issues, financial troubles, conflicts with siblings, impoundment threats by bankers; all snowballing into a pile of stressful load on my chest. At one point I said to myself, â??How long I can hold the weight, I canâ??t carry these tensions any longer.â??

Sometimes, overwhelmed by annoying hard times, a question would pop up, â??Am I being punished for something.â??

That emotional negativity had caused my wife, who stood by me at every turn of tough times, expressed her fears, as she found me helpless, â??Is there a way you could find a quick end to these burdens.â?? Her worry, plainly evident, â??how Iâ??m affected showing its blunt mark on my health and mental balance.â??

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My daughter married six years ago settled in the US, and we have kept her out of these disturbing episodes. But my son who just turned twenty-eight, well-educated and mildly mannered was looking after one of our schools. He, however, seemed silently following the unfolding of unpleasant prospects encircling the family-owned educational enterprise.

It was early morning of 25th January I have reached Hyderabad to attend some business meetings. The day was pleasant but the morning traffic looked as usual chaotic. It was late afternoon after lunch Iâ??m heading in a cab for a meeting. It started as mild discomfort in the chest, and I noticed a wave of pain flowing down my right hand and hung there for the next couple of hours.

â??Is there something serious striking me or is it my imagination,â?? worrying thoughts floated randomly. Iâ??m in the middle of the traffic flow, in an unknown corner of the city. And I donâ??t have the comfortable familiarity of my hometown where I can run into any hospital and get myself identified and treated.

But wait, I recalled quickly, â??There is a hospital close by where one of my friends, since childhood, Padma, is working.â?? How lazy Iâ??m, who would go snaking through the traffic? I didnâ??t select to visit her.

Just behold. â??Imagine how much trauma and tragedy my brief carelessness would cost me,â?? I later realized. It almost would have endangered my life and thus my family.

The lingering shoulder pain, I remembered being told was the first hint of an imminent heart-related problem. But Iâ??m sure, â??Iâ??m an unlikely target for such trauma

because my style of living was simple and frugal.â?? Iâ??m a non-alcoholic, non-smoking, almost vegetarian kind of personality. But still, a doubt lingered back in my head something like a premonition. It prompted me to take a late evening appointment with a cardiologist at a hospital close to the place I lived in Hyderabad.

Should I inform my son about this tenseness, I decided, not to.

The doctor has done his preliminary tests and a routine ECG and casually instructed me to take additional tests the next day. He appeared not so alert when I was relating my discomfort or didnâ??t give any precautionary advice after he has screened me. He sounded as if my symptoms did not add up to any forthcoming offensive!

Twenty-four hours later I would come to know, how his prognosis was misleadingly wrong and how the doctorâ??s carelessness would board me on a flight to hell. For a few hours!

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Next day the 26th of January was a Sunday, and the country was celebrating the Republic day. The day proceeded uneventfully and allowed a few hours of reading and some rest. I informed my wife about my next dayâ??s travel plans, and as my son was along with me, she made no further inquiries. The previous nightâ??s discomfort didnâ??t show its presence down my arm, and I have settled in my usual â??books and computerâ?? way of spending a holiday.

I was flinging around on the bed and my son, in the other room was readying himself to sleep. A cool breeze gently lulled me to sleep; it was around ten thirty almost deep dark outside. Then it came upon me like huge floodgates of pain left open in my chest, and it spread my entire arm in moments and next thing I found I was profusely sweating. I gave a quick instruction to my son, â??take me to the hospitalâ?• and I frenziedly dashed towards the elevator and down to my car.

No sooner the car parked outside the hospital than I banged opened the door and raced into the emergency room. I knew my son was behind me. My good luck I have been to the same hospital I got examined the previous day. Reeling with pain and confusion, I couldnâ??t be able to hold myself steady. Profusely sweating, I barely informed the confusedly startled nurses and in-charge-doctor, my hand on my chest â??itâ??s something unbearable.â?•

Doctors and nurses surrounded me; I could make out an IV attached to the wrist, heart monitor blinking and an oxygen mask clamped to ease my breathing. A helpless suspicion tore across, â??Can I endure this pounding pain. Itâ??s slowly squeezing the life out of meâ?• the stabbing spasms were hitting with all their force, and my

bodily responses failing slowly, and throat and lung went dry, and I found my breathing sounding shallow.

My son standing close was making frantic calls from my cell-phone to doctors at my hometown and a few of our relatives. A twenty-eight-year-old too stunned to make out what was happening to his dad.

As I lay convulsing, wriggling on a narrow gurney in the emergency room, wondered, would I able to see the next daylight. Exhausted, I couldnâ??t take anymore the intensity of heaviness of crush in the chest. And I saw my son too dazed not to know what next, I signaled him to get my mobile and with my damp and shivering fingers located one contact under the name â??Kosarajuâ?? pressed the dial- button and gave it to him.

I was becoming aware slowly that Iâ??m slipping into an unconscious state, and could feel little droplets of tears forming in corner of my eyes.

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As destiny would have it; I didnâ??t know then, that miraculous subconscious move, an act in a jiffy, an instinctive gut feeling to call my childhood friend and schoolmate Padma would save my life. Kosaraju was her family name as it is on my phone contact list. Strangely, my son never met her and had no inkling whoever she was. But he made the call and that near fateful night she â??in an instantâ?? sprung to action, and her discretion and foresight saved my life.

Padma was a class topper in our school in Vijayawada in the late seventies. Nirmala High School where we studied together was one of the best elite schools. I knew her as a bubbly, and â??my academics and meâ?? type of classmate. We very well knew her as a no-nonsense character among our circle of friends. I enjoyed the literary rapport she maintained and enjoyed her prime recommends.

Fifteen minutes later, she arrived at the hospital along with her husband. The moment she entered, taking in the scene she looked at me; heavily breathing, profusely sweating she quickly assessed a severe heart attack situation was in progress. After consulting the doctors, she realized, â??they cannot move me to any better facility.â??

She assured my son, now a helpless bystander, finding no one other than him, it became evident she has to decide fast, and the doctors were waiting. They couldnâ??t find anyone responsible to enquire for any further action. And I could sense that my heart was ready to cave in as minutes are dangerously ticking.

The weirdest plight was to take me to the operation theater and start the required angioplasty procedure; it required an advance payment of nearly two lakhs. The time was around midnight. I was deliriously unaware of anything around but desperately waiting when my discomfort would subside. My son was now frantically trying to speak to my wife and my relatives some 300 km away.

The kindest and magical part in my survival episode was the gesture of my friend: Padma and her husband Raju who immediately swiped in two lakhs. Only then the hospital staff wheeled me into the operation theater where a stent was placed, and the procedure lasted for about an hour. Throughout, I recall Padma holding my hand assuring me Iâ??ll be all right. And later she waited outside the operation room watching me on the monitor as the angioplasty procedure was in progress. I finally came out and shifted to ICU for a day. After six hours of battling a near-death experience, I found myself alive and breathing and free from pain.

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Five years have passed since that unforgettable fateful day. Getting sick was no joyful event. I hardly forget the day and the string of events I went through. Thoughtfully and gratefully it got permanently etched in gratitude to the wonderful couple Padma and Raju; who faithfully and defining all graceful ideals of a good friendship, had helped me to pull out from a near-death situation.

Two good souls there for me at the right moment, having true spontaneity, with the right emotions, admiringly defined the right lines that signify being there for a childhood buddy. How will I ever forget my brief rendezvous with death: 26th January 2014?

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. #mylife #life

Date Created
2019/02/24
Author
eswarnadipalli