



## CHAPTER 8

# *A Desire for Children of My Own*

*"Never let the fear of striking out get in your way."*

-George Herman 'Babe' Ruth

Babysitting all these children was wonderful, but I was longing for children of my own. I started talking about having children during our meals. Robert kept saying, "Not now, they are too expensive." Everything was money to him. It bothered me that Robert felt there should be no discussion around it. It was his way or no way.

Robert later changed his mind. Four years into our marriage, I became pregnant. I was thrilled. It was a dream come true. We had tried for approximately two years for this blessed event to happen. Because it was so difficult getting pregnant, I felt beyond thrilled when I got the phone call from the doctor's office saying the test results were positive! I will always remember getting that news. I was at a girlfriend's home, and had to sit down after the call and I cried tears of joy. It was the beginning of a perfect life. I finally would have it all! I knew I would be a great mother. I had gained

much experience from looking after other people's children. I was going to teach my child positive values and help my child to become one of Canada's best citizens. I went home and told Robert of our great news. He was happy, but not as happy as me. I think a woman feels that miraculous joy in a more powerful way. Deep down I think Robert was seeing this situation as another costly venture. He would ask people with children how much this or that cost. A couple of days later, I received another phone call from the doctor telling me that there was a mistake. Someone had read the test wrong. I was now being told it was all a mistake. I sat down and cried. Just then, my mother walked in. She said everyone was wondering why I was not pregnant yet. Just what I wanted to hear! I learned later, I had miscarried. A month later I got a call from the doctor telling me this time I really was pregnant.

My bundle of joy would arrive in late March. I was ecstatic! Just in time for Easter. I felt I was being given the best gift from above! Weeks into the pregnancy I had the typical morning sickness, and chose to love every minute of it. I made the mistake of thinking I had to eat for two, and increased my eating intake. I ate double of what I used to. I drank a four liter jug of 2% milk per day. I craved cheese cake and ate it every chance I got. I couldn't get enough chocolate éclairs. I gained more weight than I should have. That caused me to develop more painful hemorrhoids. I couldn't sit on a chair without one of those blown up air cushions. Into the seventh month I started having difficulties. I started hemorrhaging. I also had a urinary tract infection. This baby wanted to come earlier than planned. My doctor ordered me to bed for complete rest for the remaining two months. I was also given antibiotics for the infection. I had to give up babysitting. It was hard for me to sit still and do nothing but rest. To sit and watch television all day, to me, was a complete waste of time in life. I remember lying watching the Olympics with my dog, Rocky, constantly at my side, giving me companionship and unconditional love. Because our house was a two story, I had to stay in my bedroom all day with the washroom on that level, and have my food supply for the day





with me. As the weeks passed, my doctor allowed me to stay with my mother for the day. It was much easier as her house was on one level. My mother's neighbors, Mrs. Duncan, and Mrs. Carroll, would come over and visit me and help me pass the time. Mrs. Carroll, who lived across the street, was a lady I grew up knowing very well. Mrs. Carroll was like a second Mom to me. She and her husband were raising eight terrific kids. Boy, did she have patience and kindness. She would come over each day in the afternoon, and we would play cards. She would have all her dinner prepared in the morning so we could play cards longer. Mrs. Carroll made the best tea biscuits I had ever tasted, and every couple of days she would bring over a batch for us to enjoy. It was a much better way to put in the afternoon than watching television. Mrs. Duncan would share home remedies such as mint tea for settling my stomach, and hot honey and lemon for joint pain. She was the wife of Johnny. Mrs. Duncan was always a phone call away whenever Rocky was sick.

On March 27, 1988, I delivered a beautiful baby girl. I was in labor for sixteen hours. I had a difficult time in the delivery room. The baby was delivered with forceps. The more I pushed, the more she went back in. Robert couldn't handle the delivery and passed out on the delivery floor. Because of my allergy to anesthetic, my doctor could only give me gas for the pain. I have to tell you I sure loved that gas. I sucked back so much of it! During the delivery I ended up having 3rd degree tearing. My doctor had to call in a specialist to help repair the tear. My hemoglobin was very low. As a result I had to start taking iron supplements. I was anemic. After the delivery I was badly constipated. I had to have an enema. It sure wasn't pleasant, but it sure did the trick.

Lynn was such a blessing to me. When we brought her home from the hospital, I immediately put her on the floor for Rocky to check out. I didn't want Rocky to be jealous of the baby. He sniffed her and instantly became her guardian. He never left her side when

she had her afternoon nap. Rocky let me know when she was awake and was in need of something. Rocky was becoming Lynn's Nanny.

I even enjoyed getting up for late night feedings. I loved quiet time with Lynn, watching her as our eyes connected. I felt an incredible bond. With Lynn cuddling into my body as she drank her bottle, I thanked God for giving me such a wonderful gift. I was unable to breast feed so this gave both Robert and I the opportunity to feed our new baby. It was such a happy time in my life. I found joy in everyday things. Watching Lynn as she slept, seeing her body stretch and wiggle as she woke up, and even observing her tiny face turn red as she filled her diaper, reminded me of miracles and put a smile on my face.

As time passed, I watched Robert spending more time alone with the baby, and less time with me. There was never an evening set aside to sit together, and have a conversation. Not that we really had ever sat and shared our day. Now, it felt like he had lost interest in me. It was something I couldn't explain, however, I definitely felt him withdrawing more each day.

We didn't have anyone to baby-sit, so going out on a romantic evening was out of the question. There simply wasn't money available for that. Every bit of his pay was accounted for; at least that is what he told me.

Rocky and I would take Lynn out each day for a nice long walk and enjoy the fresh air. I walked often, trying to lose the weight I had gained while eating for two. I was not having much success. In my naïve mind I thought that one loses all that weight within days of having a baby. Boy was I wrong!

Nine months after Lynn's birth I developed a lump on my eye lid. It grew bigger and more painful. It got to a point where I could not open my eye. I could not see out of that eye. My doctor referred me to a specialist. It turned out I had an allergy to smoke. My tear





ducks were clogged. My eye lid needed to have surgery to remove the blockage. I was beyond a nervous wreck about all of this. The doctor had to cut open my eye lid and remove all the jelly-like substance that filled the tear ducts. I was mad at the fact that this was caused by second-hand smoke. As if to add insult to injury, because of the allergy to anesthetic, I couldn't be put under. The entire idea of having my eye lid cut open really stressed me out. My doctor gave me a drug to calm me down the night before. It did not help in any way. I was up all night shaking uncontrollably and vomiting. I was afraid something terrible might happen during this surgery, and then what would happen to my new baby. The surgery went well. I had to have a patch on the eye for one week. My mother had to look after Lynn as I was given strict orders from my doctor to sit still and try not to move my eyes. Within one month my other eye developed the lumps and I had to have the surgery again. After that experience I never allowed anyone to even smoke on my property. If they felt they needed a cigarette I made them go down our driveway and onto the road and get as far as possible from me and my child. I didn't like smoke around my child and I sure didn't hide that fact from people.

In January of 1989 I wanted to get serious and lose the unwanted weight. My doctor referred me to a dietitian at our local hospital. I don't believe in fad diets and wanted to lose the weight properly and in a healthy way. Within a month I started losing weight. I was very excited. My aunt, who also wanted to lose extra weight, started coming with me. We were supporting each other with our goal. We started noticing I was losing more weight than she was at each weigh-in. The dietitian was not happy about the rate at which I was losing. She told me it was not healthy for my body to lose so much so quickly. I had lost sixty pounds in less than three months. I began having diarrhea on a regular basis. As I kept losing weight, the dietitian and doctor became more concerned. I personally thought I had not looked this good since high school. During my yearly checkup, normal blood work gave an indication as to why I was losing weight.



## CHAPTER 9

# *A Death Sentence*

*"Your greatest gift lies beyond the door named fear."*

-The Sufis Scriptures

I will always remember May 5, 1989. It was the day my life changed forever. I was diagnosed as having a chronic disease-Crohn's disease. I was 26 years old and married with a thirteen month old baby girl. When my family doctor said, "Your test results confirm you have a chronic disease," I thought it was the end of the world for me. She gave me the following meaning for this dreadful disease: "Crohn's disease is inflammation which penetrates the entire thickness of the bowel wall. It may attack at any point of the gastrointestinal system from the mouth to anus. Neither surgery nor drugs can cure Crohn's disease as it may recur in other parts of the digestive tract".

"Oh my God! I am going to die," was my first thought! There were tears in my eyes; my heart was pounding; I felt overwhelming panic. I felt dizzy and thought I was going to pass out right there in her office. I began to feel scared, very alone, and then angry at this rotten deal I was given. My mind started whirling with countless questions. How was I going to be a good mother to my baby? How

