

# Stronger than my

CIRCUMSTANCES

MY JOURNEY WITH CIDP

BROOKE LANGLAD

### 💖 Stronger Than My Circumstances

By Brooke D Lanfair

“When I couldn’t, I wanted to. Now that I can, I try until I can’t.”

### ✨ Dedication

To my son, Amir —

You have been more of an inspiration than you will ever understand.

Watching you grow and simply seeing me through your loving eyes gave me the strength to keep going.

Thank you for being my light.

### 🙏 Acknowledgments

I give all glory to God for bringing me safely home, knowing exactly what I needed.

To my mother, Peggy Bailey — thank you for caring for me when I couldn’t care for myself.

Your hands, your heart, and your presence were the medicine I needed most.

## Stronger than my circumstances

To my father Carl Bailey— thank you for being there for both me and Amir, providing a safe space when everything else felt unstable.

To my brother, Corey Bailey — thank you for always being just a phone call away.

Your support, your love, and your willingness to step in whenever we needed you meant the world.



### Let Me Tell My Story

In December 2021, I had moved back home to Memphis from Chicago and started working as a TSA officer, having transferred from ORD. I was excited to be completing my certification in Homeland Security. Not sure when I contracted COVID per se, but working with the traveling public, I could only imagine.

Initially, my supervisors were concerned about the diagnosis and granted me the time off required for quarantine. When I was diagnosed a second time with COVID, another 10 days were granted. As I prepared to get cleared to return, I was asked to come back early regardless of the result of another test.

I did as I was advised — only to get sick, suffering from shortness of breath and dizziness. I was sent home... never to return.



### Stronger Than My Circumstances (Continued)

I was slick happy for the vacation — finally able to live without pressure. My family and I decided to make the most of the time together, traveling and exploring new things.

But then... my body started to betray me.

First, I began to fall out of the blue. No tripping, no warning — I'd just collapse.

The first time scared me to death. I was walking into the bathroom, and it was like I blinked and suddenly I was on the floor. I had urinated and fallen at the same time. I was confused, but I carried on as if nothing happened.

Then it happened again.

Fatigue hit me like a wave I couldn't fight. My energy was nonexistent. My son and I had plans to fly back to Chicago to bring in the New Year with friends — but our flight got canceled.

I was somewhat relieved, needing the extra rest.

But the next morning, my body said “no more.”

I could barely stand. The paramedics were called.

I was taken to the hospital, confused as ever. Left on a gurney in a cold hallway for hours, poked and prodded, hungry, and sleepy — doctors ran tests, thinking I had a blood infection.

But they found nothing.

I stayed in the hospital for several days, barely able to walk. I returned home with a walker and was assigned physical and occupational therapy.

Soon after, the pain and tingling in my hands began — unbearable.

Then one morning, while getting ready for therapy, my nurse helped me from bed... and my legs gave out.

From that moment, I was partially paralyzed.

### What Is Wrong With Me?

At this point, I felt like I was going in circles. No one — not even the doctors — seemed to have a clue what was really going on with me.

I couldn't walk, so I had to be carried down the steps. The medications had me hallucinating. I was miserable, lying in that bed day after day.

And as if that wasn't enough, I was going through a divorce.

It was a long battle but luckily somewhat drama-free — which was a blessing, because anything more would have broken me.

I had seen neurologists who found nothing. Meanwhile, my vision was becoming so blurry that I thought I was losing my sight completely.

They referred me to an eye specialist. I spent hours getting my eyes tested — and they found nothing. No explanation for my declining vision.

They did sleep studies. Checked my breathing. Monitored my heart. Watched my blood pressure. Every theory came and went.

The leading theory? “Long COVID.”

That was their answer for everything. It felt like a diagnosis of dismissal.

Eventually, I was moved downstairs. It made things easier for my mother to care for me. She could get to me quickly when I needed her.

That time was a blur... dark, disorienting, and deeply humbling.

But finally, in February 2022, I got the appointment that changed everything.

I met with a specialist — Dr. Lance Wright at Semmes Murphy Medical Center.

When he ran the nerve tests on my feet, legs, arms, and hands... it was as if he could see what no one else had seen.

He recognized my symptoms immediately.

He explained my diagnosis — Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy.

And to be honest?

I was just relieved that what I had... finally had a name.

I immediately began immunoglobulin treatments. Weekly.

The nurses rotated — some were amazing, warm, full of love. A few even became like family and still check on me to this day.

Others... not so much.

Some had no bedside manner. Some couldn't even find a vein. I'd be left with bruises all up and down my arms. After all that? They'd say they'd have to come back later and try again.

It was frustrating. Draining. Dehumanizing.

But the good nurses and the therapists — they were different.

They showed up for me like angels. They didn't just treat my body — they nurtured my spirit.

We prayed. We talked. We shared stories. They reminded me that healing wasn't just medical — it was emotional.

### One Step at a Time

I had gotten so tired of not being in control of my life that one day, I just decided — I'm moving back upstairs.

I had been receiving immunoglobulin treatments for a good while, and I was improving, slowly but surely.

Dr. Wright had been honest:

He told me I would never fully recover due to the amount of damage in my hands and feet.

But still — I was moving better. I was doing more for myself.

Even doing my own makeup again.

That might seem small to some, but for me, it was huge.

I started getting out of the house more. I felt a little more like myself.

Climbing those stairs was more than a physical victory — it was symbolic.

I wasn't just moving back into a room. I was reclaiming my strength.



And every night, I prayed:

“God, just show me the next step.”

Not the whole plan — just the next step.

One night, while scrolling on TikTok, I came across videos on how to create journals using Amazon KDP. That’s when something shifted.

I began working on myself in a new way.

I created a couple of journals. Then I made an affirmation coloring book — something I thought might help others and create some passive income for me.

I realized that one luxury we often overlook is the ability to write and sign our own names.

With my hands now balled up — almost like fists — I decided to create a book for people like me.

A tool to practice basic writing skills again.

It was personal. Healing.

The book didn’t sell well — in fact, one person even left a review calling it too elementary.

Oh well.

It helped me.

Later, I was referred to a hand specialist — someone who was supposed to “fix” my hands. I was excited, hopeful. Ready to get back to “normal.”

But I should’ve known something was off when the doctor showed up prepared to operate on the wrong hand.

And of course — they couldn’t find my vein.

Needless to say, the surgery happened. But what came next?

Just more disappointment.

They sent me to aggressive hand therapy.

I expected movement. Improvement. Results.

Instead? Week after week... I was just given new splints.

Never any real exercises. Just another handmade brace.

One every week.

Eventually, I said: Forget it.

That’s when I adopted my new mindset:

“

“When I couldn’t, I wanted to. Now that I can, I’m going to try — until I can’t.”

After the in-home nurses stopped coming, I transitioned to outpatient therapy.

There, too, I found people who became like family. We shared stories. We laughed. They knew about my son, and I knew about theirs.

I leaned more on my walker and less on the wheelchair.

Being upstairs gave me privacy to push myself — and pride to prove that I could.

I had something to prove to myself.

My son was graduating high school, and I refused to miss that moment.

And I didn’t.

I was there. Standing. Smiling. Watching him walk across that stage.



### New Beginnings

After graduation, my son enrolled in college — and I couldn’t have been prouder.

That moment lit something inside me.

I asked myself:

“What’s stopping me from starting over?”

The answer: nothing.

There was nothing holding me back anymore.

No illness. No relationship. No fear.

You see, when I first went to college, I had no direction. No real plan. No deep sense of purpose.

Like a lot of kids, I just wanted to get away from home.

When I returned and joined the workforce, I started with security — and that led to a 10-year career in Corrections.

Then I met my now ex-husband. He came with an instant family... and an instant storm.

Yes, we had a child together — my beautiful son.

But the chaos that came with that relationship eventually became too heavy to carry.

Still, I kept trying to go back to school.

Over and over.

And each time, there was always an excuse.

Some other “need” that had to come first.

Some way his plans took priority over mine — always in the name of “family.”

After 20 years, it was finally time for me to excel.

When I re-enrolled in college, I was more excited than I’d been in years.

I even joined the gospel choir!

Yes — I was back on campus, twice a week, singing and smiling like I did back in the day.

Being active again gave me confidence.

By September 2024, Dr. Wright told me the words I’d waited so long to hear.

“You’re in remission.”

The treatments had worked. I had recovered — as much as I could — given the severity of my condition.

Side note:

Before I was officially declared in remission, I had asked about Mary Jane as a possible option for pain management.

Let's just say... my whole life changed, lol.

Lets keep in mind, before my diagnosis my brother would bring me supplements from the African shops that we thought would heal whatever was ailing me. I had become numb to life and alchol and I had become teven closer than before

When I was forced to see my flaw. So Mary became a better friend

I ended that semester on the Dean's List.

And for once, I wasn't just surviving.

I was thriving.

### **Trusting the Process**

After I completed spring semester, my son came home — ready to shed the “Freshman 15” and get serious about the gym.

That energy? It rubbed off on me.

I realized... it was time to focus not just on surviving, but on strengthening my mental and physical health.

That's when I became a Board Certified Master Mental Health Coach and launched something that had been on my heart for a long time:

**The Skye Consultancy**

My mission?

To help artists — especially those in the music and entertainment industry — protect their peace, purpose, and mental wellness while navigating fame, pressure, and the public eye.

I started creating content in ways that felt aligned with my journey.

That's when I discovered digital marketing and PLR (Private Label Rights) content.

It was like a whole new world — and I remember thinking:

“I wish I had known about this before I ever touched Amazon KDP

But no regrets. Every step brought me here.

Now, I'm in the gym four times a week — not because someone tells me I should...

but because I finally understand that my body is my responsibility, and my peace is non-negotiable.

Yes, I still have weakness in my limbs from time to time.

But when my body speaks? I listen.

I rest when I need to...

And I push when I can.

Because this new version of me — the one with purpose and peace — she didn't come easy.

She was built in the dark.

Rebuilt through pain.

And shaped by faith

“When I couldn't, I wanted to. Now that I can, I will try — until I can't.”

This isn't the end of my story. It's just the beginning of a new chapter — one written by a woman who refused to quit.

### What I Wish I Knew About CIDP

- Get a second opinion if something doesn't feel right
- Document everything: symptoms, meds, doctor notes
- IVIG isn't the only treatment — ask about options
- Accept help — healing takes a village
- Disability is not defeat
- Listen to your body



## Stronger than my circumstances

- Healing is not linear
- Advocate for yourself — no one knows your pain better than you
- You are not your diagnosis

### Resources for CIDP Warriors

- GBS|CIDP Foundation International –[gbs-cidp.org](https://gbs-cidp.org)
- NORD (Rare Diseases) –[rarediseases.org](https://rarediseases.org)
- Semmes Murphey Neurologic & Spine Institute
- The Skye Consultancy –[Shopify Store](#)
- Facebook:[The Skye Consultancy](#)

### Daily Affirmations

- I am stronger than what tried to break me.
- Healing is not linear, but I am always progressing.
- Every breath I take is proof that purpose still lives in me.
- I deserve peace, even on days I feel chaos.

- My story is not over. It's unfolding beautifully.
- "When I couldn't, I wanted to. Now that I can, I try until I can't."



### Journal Prompts for Reflection

- What does healing look like for me today?
- What are three things I accomplished this week — big or small?
- What is one part of my story that I'm learning to accept?
- Who or what gives me strength on difficult days?
- If I could speak to my younger self during my diagnosis, what would I say?



# Stronger than my circumstances

In "Stronger than My Circumstances," the author Brooke Lanfair, shares a powerful journey of resilience through chronic illness, personal upheaval, and the pursuit of healing and purpose. As she navigates the challenges of partial paralysis, a divorce, and the quest for self-discovery, she transforms her struggles into a mission to support others in the arts. With her son as her guiding light, she proves that strength lies in determination and the unwavering belief that one can rise above any circumstance.

