

No Matter What,

We Have Each Other

I remember being a little girl sitting in church, my tiny legs swinging over the edge of the pew, listening to my grandmother give her testimony about the greatness of God. Oftentimes, in a slightly off-key pitch and syncopated beat, she would confidently sing about her determination to “walk with Jesus” through hard trials and tribulations. Through it all, she would remain faithful. I didn’t realize then that in those moments, her words, her songs, and her life would become the still waters that guided me through my own passage—from that little girl to the woman I am today.

My transition from girlhood to womanhood happened in April 2016, after the stillbirth of my daughter, Zakiyah. I was pregnant with twins and suddenly found myself navigating the joy of welcoming a newborn daughter while simultaneously carrying the unimaginable grief of losing the other. For a long time, I struggled to make sense of the two experiences existing side by side.

Much like my favorite picture of my twins together shortly after delivery, with Zamara securely holding Zakiyah’s hand. In that photograph, it almost seems as though Zamara is saying, “No matter what, we have each other.” I often return to that image because it reminds me that neither experience is “better” than the other. They both exist. They are both real. And they are both part of our story.

The day of the funeral and the extended stay of my daughter, Zamara, in the NICU remain a blur to me even today. During that time, the little girl in me wanted nothing more than to run away from everything and everyone. I craved solace. I longed to be nurtured myself, to be held and reassured. Still, the woman in me had responsibilities that could not wait. I

How Grief, Ancestral My Path to

Faith, and Love Shaped Womanhood

made funeral arrangements. I consoled my other children. I continued to give of myself selflessly—breastfeeding my newborn daughter, creating a warm space for family and loved ones, and making room for others to grieve while I was grieving as well.

Growing up, I came to recognize that the transition from little Black girl to womanhood is often riddled with trauma and accompanied by trials and tribulations. We learn early how to be strong, how to endure, and how to carry things that aren’t always easy to put into words. When I think of being a Black woman, I think of strength. I think of wisdom. I think of resilience. And I think of embodying the spirit of the great women who came before me—women like my grandmother, who endured, believed, nurtured, prayed, and kept going.

Today, with faith, strength, courage, and wisdom, the woman I have become embraces the little girl I once was. That carefree little girl who sat on the edge of a church pew, swinging her legs, watching these qualities modeled before her. Her feet could not yet reach the floor, but somehow, she had enough faith to give herself the reassurance she needed in that moment.

At the end of the day, womanhood has taught me that I don’t have to leave that little girl behind to be a woman. I carry her with me, nurture her, and remind her that she is worthy of these things as well.

And so, the woman and the little girl in me hold onto one another today. Neither has to be alone.

Quietly, they remind each other: “No matter what, we have each other.”

I am Valerie Mosley; TS#33 of 52 of The SoulTown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! ☺

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