

Excerpt from Common Threads:

From Chapter 5, “If It’s Predictable, It’s Preventable...or is it?”

I had a lot of time to search the dark places in my mind while I was sitting beside Justin’s hospital bed and haunting the halls of the hospital, questioning my actions, my decisions, and my intentions. If it’s predictable, it’s preventable. What could I have done differently? How could I have changed the path Justin chose to travel? That’s where the whole philosophy of the human’s gift of free agency comes in. We all have the opportunity to make our own decisions, our own choices, for our own reasons. People don’t change until they reach their own personal inflection point—and that’s usually a point where something very painful happens to encourage that change. It doesn’t matter how much we love our children and how clearly we can see that they are making choices that will not be in their best interest; we can’t control them indefinitely.

What did I learn from this life-changing experience? Family is more important than any occupation or career goal; time seems to stand still when a loved one may not see tomorrow; you can’t force an adult to do something against his or her will; you must plant positive seeds when a child is very young. And I learned that being available with unconditional love is a wonderful gift for anyone.