



Ann
Johnson
presentation

Ann Johnson:
mother, daughter,
wife and stroke
survivor



Ann, what is your first memory of Grace after your stroke?

When we were first reunited. I had spent a month in intensive care, and I don't remember much of that. I was then moved to an acute care ward and my family decided that it was time for me to see Grace. Since we had been separated for a month, I was expecting her to be scared or shy. None of that happened and she just sat on my lap and stared at me. She knew I was her mom. I was the person that had fed her and loved her for all those months. She was just 14 months old at that point.



Ann, do you have other memories of Grace when she was a young girl?



Grace was potty trained when I was in the rehabilitation hospital. In the mornings I went to my therapies and my afternoons were spent with my mother and daughter. We kept a small potty in my hospital room. We often took long walks through the hospital, once the rubber tire came off the wheel for my wheelchair. A physical therapist stopped to help us and as she pulled on the tire Grace started yelling at her. Grace thought she was hurting me, Grace has always been very protective of me. Before my stroke, I would always take Grace in the bath with me. The first-time home care gave me a bath, Grace took off all her clothes and got in the bath also.

Was Grace's transition to school difficult?

Grace was very excited to start school. I always did my best to be present and visible, so all the children were exposed to the lady in the wheelchair and didn't frighten them.

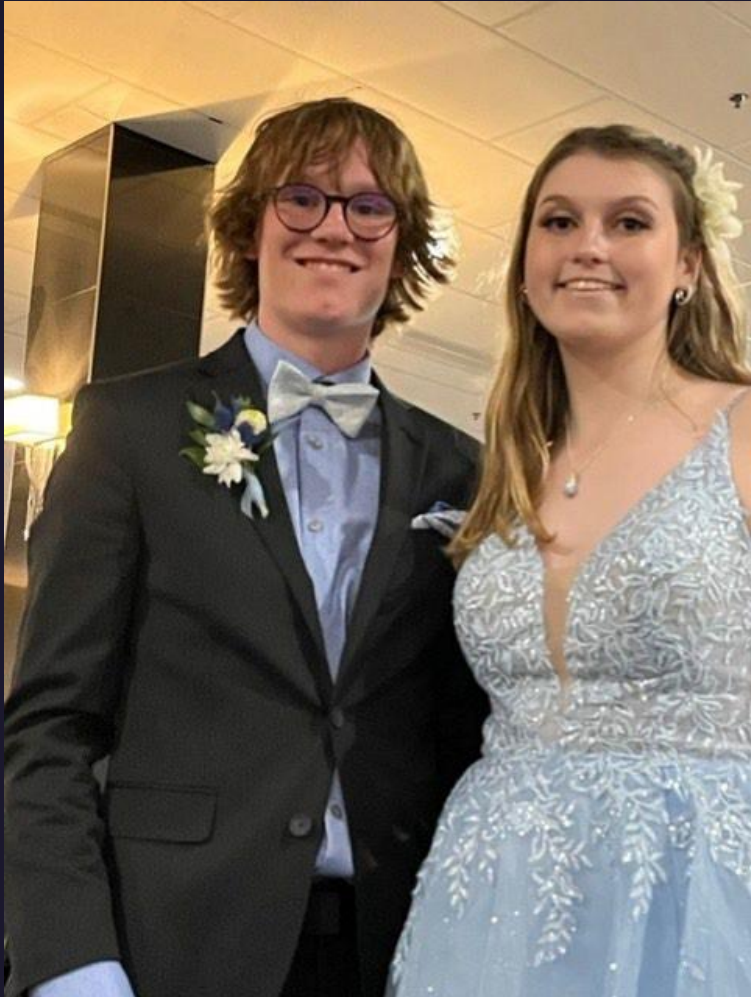


Ann, how was your relationship with Grace from the ages 12-16?

Before my stroke, I was a high school teacher and well aware that teenagers were all embarrassed of their parents. It was hard at times but not unexpected. Grace got a counselor at 14 and I feel it was a beneficial relationship for her to have.



Ann, considering Grace as a young woman now, what do you think her greatest strengths are?



I feel that Grace has perseverance and works hard, she is also a kind soul.

Grace Johnson: Ann's Daughter



Grace, what is your first memory of your mother?



One of the first memories I have is walking with my mom and grandma to a local park to feed the geese. Both my mom and grandmother watched me feed bread to the geese like any parent or guardian would.

Grace, how old were you when you recognized that your mother was different than other mothers?

I noticed in the first grade when I went to a playdate at my best friend's house that her mom did not look like mine but I did not see that as a bad thing. My father is African American and when I was younger I never remember seeing many other African American people so I was used to my parents not exactly looking like everyone else's. This girl's mother also happened to be Indigenous so in some ways, that made her mother "different" as well. Secondly, I remember being very young and picking up my mother from a place where she would go and play cards or games with other disabled people, as well as, my aunt is severely autistic so my mother was not the only disabled person I was exposed to. My first time remembering that my mom was actually pretty different than other kid's parents was in the third grade. Before parent teacher interviews my two best friends and I were explaining to my teacher that "my mom could fly" my best friends never made me feel different or ashamed by who my mom was. Even when telling my teacher the details into my mom's health I never viewed myself having a disabled mother as a negative thing since these two close friends of mine never made me feel as that way and neither did any of my other family members.



Did you ever feel that you needed to be good to help reduce your parents stress?

I saw the way my brother and his personal situation stressed everyone out, however, this was not entirely his fault. In my early memories of my brother, he was a pre-teen/teenage boy, we had a big age gap. I remember him acting out and being defiant like all teenagers, on top of other things that he was forced to deal with at a young age. Other important people in my life, like my grandmothers, also seemed stressed out and upset in which the situation that my brother was forced to deal with, so, I did feel some pressure to be good but in other ways I feel as though I was raised as a good child.



Is there a reason why you are such a hard worker?



I feel as though my whole life has been a little less typical than others around me, the way I saw my grandmother deal with it really resonated with me. Some believe my grandma was too neat and too organized, however, I never saw her in many forms of anxiety or being overwhelmed. My father on the other hand had and still has a lot more issues when it comes to organization and preparedness. My father does have a lot on his plate and is constantly dealing with things so I do not blame all of the struggles in which he deals with on him. I do feel as though things could have been a bit easier for my father if he was as organized as my grandmother and mother. Having both my mom and grandma as these role models really made me appreciate the skills of organization and hard work.

Dorothy Dunlop:
Ann's Mother & Grace's
Grandmother



Dorothy, how do you feel that you helped foster Ann & Grace's relationship when Grace was a young?

I felt it was important for them to see each other each day and share time with each other. I wanted each of them to feel happy and fulfilled.



William (Bill)
Johnson: Ann's
Husband &
Grace's Father



Bill, how did you feel that you helped facilitate the relationship between Ann and Grace when Grace was a teenager?

I think I was not the best at facilitating a relationship between mother and daughter, but one thing we did well was integrate Grace with mom and home care. At the time when Grace was young, she loved helping out with home care to take care of mom.



Gail Fry: Ann's friend, a former colleague, and Grace's math tutor



How are Ann and Grace similar?

Having both been Ann's teacher and later colleague and later Grace's tutor. I find them both intelligent, hard working and conscientious people who are both also kind, considerate and good natured. Both are physically tall and athletic.





How are Ann and Grace different?

Grace is a quieter, more reserved person. In High School, Grace was more serious about her classes while Ann was more of an extrovert, with a large, great laugh.



Thank you

Ann Johnson

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