

# “Good Days, Bad Days”

The story of the experiences  
with the care of a prematurely born baby.

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## Chapter 1: The Shock.

I stood there in shock, as the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Nurse gently handed the fragile, bird like body of the baby, to her mother. I was standing by with earnest expectation and joy for my wife. Who was about experience holding her first born and for the first time. There were about six different types of tubes and apparatus connected to Tabitha's body, from head to toe. I.V.'s in her head and both arms, a feeding tube running from her mouth, down her throat into her stomach, and a host of other Cardio and Respiratory monitoring devices and sensors attached to her chest and stomach areas.

It had been a good day for Tabitha. Her oxygen saturation levels had been great all day, and her heart rate was within reasonable limits. And she had also gone without intubation for days now. It had been 2 weeks since she was born, and it was time to finally allow the mother to touch her little baby, outside of the incubator. As the nurse managed the cabling attached to Tabitha, her mother prepared her arms to embrace her baby for the very first time.

She had been trained regarding the special attention she would have to give, when holding the baby. She would have to be extremely gentle. The baby was delivered at 29 weeks and barely weighed a pound. This was her first child, and prematurely born. Her mother would have to be so careful; she resembled a little bird with a broken wing, and so delicate.

As my wife opened her arms to receive the babe, her excitement and anticipation began to show in her facial expressions. This was it, it was time to finally hold her child, her first born child. She had been waiting patiently, and had been training for the event. Which only added to her anticipation and anxiousness. And then the child was gently placed in her Mother's arms. Her entire body extending to only about the length of her Mother's hand, as she was so small.

As her mother looks down at her baby, suddenly a panic came over her and she said loudly, and abruptly. “There are too many wires, there are too many wires”! Then she motioned for someone to take the baby away. I immediately offered her assistance, as did the Nurse. She had been waiting for what seemed like a lifetime to embrace her new born baby, and she was finally about to.

But the feeling of wires attached to her daughter's frail little body, evoked an anxiety attack. I was completely sympathetic and understanding, during that moment. But there were no appropriate words to say. The reality of having a premature technically dependent child, was too much for her to handle, at that very moment.

She would have to adjust, in days to come. It had been a pregnancy that ended abruptly at six months, with a Caesarean Section birth. Having never been inside a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit prior to having her child, she just hadn't been prepared for such an experience as this, and was simply not ready for these kinds of emotions. Who could be prepared for such a surreal environment? One where life hangs in the balance, between life and death, daily, and changes sometimes hourly.

This was an entirely different world, one that neither of us had a reference for. We would have to learn to adjust to this surreal environment, quickly too. It was Friday, September 08th 2007, 1000am. In one day, we were faced with the knowledge that there was significant concern from my wife's Gynecologist. About her high blood pressure being life threatening for her and our baby. After their meeting at his office. Dr. Grace then directed her to go immediately to the Emergency Room.

I was at work, when I got the call, from my wife. "I'm heading to the Emergency Room. "I'm not feeling well at all, and the Doctor is very concerned". She exclaimed. I immediately pulled my boss into a corner office and explained to him, what I'd just learned. I had no way to know what was ahead of me, nor anything about the journey I was about to embark on. I only knew that I needed to be by my wife's side, during this new storm. As I made my way out of the office building, my mind raced with thoughts my wife, and unborn child.

What was the matter? I pondered to myself, until the blood vessels in my head seemed to throb and pulse, uncontrollably? And my heart rate was accelerating. I didn't have time to think on it, I had to react, and make it to the Emergency Room. I didn't know what I'd find. The drive felt like the longest drive ever, it seemed to be the drive to save my family and I that I was in a race against time.

And the tension only increased as I arrived at the hospital and as I walked through the corridors. As I did, there was a silence that was so eerie, that it was disturbing to me. My ears were ringing, and I couldn't get the ringing in my ears to stop. I was a wreck, but I knew I had to pull myself together. So, I stopped and prayed, about it. Then I was able to get my composure.

Then I entered the reception area and asked for my wife, by name. The person there looked her up and then informed me that my wife had been checked into the Maternity Ward, and directed me there. I was on a mission now, I was getting closer to her, and closer to learning what was happening. Although, I had apprehension and some trepidation. I pressed on, knowing my presence was required.

Maternity Ward? I thought to myself. She said she wasn't feeling well, why would she be in the Maternity Ward? I questioned, myself as I hurried there. Then I made it to the ward, and asked for my wife at the Nurses Station. A Nurse greeted me, then pointed me in the direction of my wife's room. I gathered some composure, and then walked toward the room number, then, I began to walk into the room, the door was open. My wife was sleeping but not soundly. She seemed as though she was having a bad dream. I thought of waking her, but I didn't want to disturb her. So, I just stood there, as I observed the room and the various monitoring apparatus attached to my wife's chest.

I knew what heart monitoring topology looked like, from my experience as an EMT. But I was ill prepared for what I was witnessing. It had been a good day at work, and now I was looking at my wife in an all but unconscious state. On a stretcher and I had no clue as to why. I only had questions and no answers. Along with that feeling that you get in your stomach, when fear grips you. Just then, then a doctor walks into the room, wearing surgical scrubs. And he introduces himself as Dr. Grace.

Then he began to study the Heart Monitoring machines, with the wires attached to my wife. He didn't speak, he just read the printed outputs, it seemed repeatedly. Meticulously, as though he was reading a map and looking for clues to a hidden treasure. He briefly stopped, then looked up at me and said. "My concern is your wife's blood pressure. It's extremely high. And it could create danger for the baby". I am considering performing a Caesarean section birth, this weekend.

And I'd like another ultrasound of the baby, now. I didn't know what to say, I was completely caught off guard. But I responded, "What's the risk?" "What is the problem?" He said, "her blood pressure being so high, is an indication of a number of potential problems". "Possibly, Preeclampsia". "A condition that sometimes happens with first time births". "The baby's life could be at risk, as well". "I am evaluating next steps, I'll keep you informed".

A cold chill ran down my spine as my heart began to pump faster. Just then, my wife opened her eyes and moaned. I walked over to her and looked down at her. She seemed surprised, and looked a little confused as she slowly raised her head up from the pillow. I spoke softly to her and asked, "how do you feel"? She said, "awful". Then Dr. Grace leaned over to her and said that he was closely monitoring her blood pressure, and heart rates, and that he was ordering another ultrasound of the baby.

He said that she needed to try and relax, and that there was nothing that was happening, that he hadn't seen before. Then he collected the printed papers from the EKG machine, and said that he'd be back shortly. Then he left the room. I waited for my wife to wake up a little more, before talking to her. Then, I started to explain to her what Dr. Grace had told me. I tried to be as delicate as I could in speaking to her about the matter. Our child's life was possibly threatened, and so was hers.

I tried to just listen for her to ask me something first. But then I told her what the doctor had told me. That her blood pressure was a big concern, and that the baby could be in trouble. She said nothing for a moment, then she sighed, and laid her head back on to the pillow. I was out of words, but full of understanding. It was an awkward moment, neither of us knew what to say or how to be. We had no reference for how to behave, and I had so many emotions running.

Little did either of us know, but we were about to be ushered into the world of Neonatal Child, and special needs care. I told my wife I loved her, and that I was going to be by her side, no matter what was happening. I felt I had to encourage her, and try to comfort her. She was being a real trooper, trying to appear content. I had seen that look from her before. I thought that I should call my Parent's in Law, but I resisted the nervous feelings I felt at the moment, and stayed by my wife's side.

But I still needed someone to talk to. Then the ultrasound technician arrives and begins the processes of performing the newly ordered ultrasound. I recalled the first one that Tabetha had at 3 months, when we learned the baby's gender. All eyes were glued to the screen. Watching the rhythmic beats of the baby's heart, and the subtle movements of her appendages, in the illuminated life fluid, of her mother's womb.

Then Doctor Grace returns, with a colleague, and introduced him as Doctor Shields. Doctor Grace smiles at my wife, and said, “hi”, to her. My wife grinned a bit. Doctor Grace said he consulted with Doctor Shields about our case. It was the first I’d heard the situation referred to as a case. So, I knew it was serious. But I reserved my alarm for whatever was about to be said. He indicated that my wife’s blood pressure has been consistently high over the last couple of hours, despite the medication she’d received to lower her pressure, and that this is what was prompting the potential C Section, birth.

He was blunt yet showed a measure of compassion in his voice as he spoke to us, as he explained to us the seriousness of the situation. My wife’s eyes began to tear up. And my hands started to shake. As if it wasn’t enough for us already, then Doctor Grace said, “based upon the readings of the EKG, and her heart rate I am inclined to move forward with the procedure this evening’.

I was stunned, just a few hours ago I was at work, having a regular day. Now, my unborn child and wife were experiencing a life-threatening situation. Dr. Grace and Dr. Shields conferred with us, and did the best they could to prepare us mentally for what was about to happen. As they did, my wife began to grow more and more uncomfortable, and agitated. She was groaning and moaning more intently now, and gesturing that her head was hurting. Then, Dr. Grace moves over the EKG machine, and prints of another sheet of data.

Then asks for Dr. Shields to step outside the room momentarily, with him. I could feel the situation was getting worse, but I had to hold on to my composure. I couldn’t fall apart, although my heart was aching, and my pulse was raising. I had to be calm, cool and collected. I knew I couldn’t let my fear show to my wife. I knew I needed to show strength, although the fear inside was there. Then I realized, I was getting way ahead of myself with my presumptions.

Then the doctors returned to the room and then Dr. Grace stated the problem with my wife’s blood pressure wasn’t getting better and that he feared that the baby could be in serious trouble as the condition progressed. He then called my wife’s condition, “Preeclampsia”. This was all new to me, but I wasn’t going to walk away from the challenge. I knew that I had to be strong. I knew I was going to stand firm and embrace the problem. Like every other challenge in my life that I had encountered before this one, I was going to embrace it, not run from it but face it head on. I wanted to learn all I could about the syndrome of preeclampsia, as it may affect everything that I cherished in life, my family.

Suddenly, my life was catapulted into a level of intensity I’d never experienced before. Even in my days in the Military, or even as an EMT-Firefighter. I only knew I had to hold it together, and I assumed that life as I knew it was about to drastically change. Looking back on that day, I would say, I was stronger than I thought I was, and when the test came, I found the strength from God to perform and pass the test. Through GOD’s Grace, and my Faith.

I tried to console my wife, as I waited for the Doctors to return. My wife has a way of being afraid but pretending not to be, and not showing it. I knew she was upset, so I tried mentioning to her how I thought she was being so tough, so far. I told her that sometimes things just happen in life to people, and that we’d get through it all, no matter what happened. But in that moment, there were just no right words to say. There was no rule book for guidance as to what to do, and how to be respond in that situation. I didn’t know what I was supposed to feel, or say. How could anyone know what to say, or do?

If only I had a crystal ball. I hoped my experience would be useful to others. I know and believe now, that it was all part of GODs plan, to bring our family closer together. I would later sympathize with others going through the same ordeal. I would later understand first hand, their pain. But at the time, I could only feel the anxiety and stress of my own pain and at that moment in time, I just wanted my wife to be safe, and to know that my baby was going to be safe.

I just wanted some answers, and they weren't coming to me fast enough. My excitement was mounting. Then, Dr. Grace returns to the room about an hour later. This time, I noticed he was wearing scrubs. He asked my wife if she was able to hear and understand him okay. She slowly nodded a yes. Then he looked me in the eye, and said he felt that the Preeclampsia wasn't stabilizing, and that my wife's blood pressure was still dangerously elevated.

He then said that in his opinion, it was time to move forward with the Caesarean, rather than wait until the weekend. To protect both the baby's and the Mothers life, and that it was time for my wife to make some decisions, to move forward. Or risk the potential death of both her and the baby. A chill ran through me as those words echoed through my mind. It was like being in the worst nightmare of my life, and I wasn't waking up. I wasn't dreaming, it was happening.

He then said it was time to move forward, if my wife agreed. I began to gaze down at my wife, who now had a look of surprise, and peace at the same time. We both knew, without speaking what the right choice was going to be in that moment. I could only imagine what was going through her mind, knowing she was about to give birth, so early, and so abruptly. She gave consent to Dr. Grace. Then he said the nurse would be in shortly with consent forms. At that, I gave my wife a smile, as I gently caressed her for head.

We spent the next few minutes with my wife just telling me what I needed to do at home, for the next few days, as I just sat listening. My wife was a bossy type, and doesn't like to let me lead, and certainly not now. But I assured her, I was going to handle things at home in her absence. I tried my best to comfort her, as the anesthetist explained the next steps to us. Which included asking me if I cared to be in the room, to observe the birth. I said that I was happy to be invited. After all, I'd gotten my wife into this mess, I thought.

Then, shortly after, the moment was here. The team was ready to wheel my wife back into the O.R., and then they came for her, and left with her. Then, the nurse then escorted me to a room to change into scrubs, which I did. I was all dressed up, with some where to go. The excitement was building up in me. But it was drowned out by the facts that my wife and child were in danger, and that an emergency surgery was being about to be performed. I had to force myself to look on the bright side. I had to figure out how to keep the right perspective, and push through the negative thoughts, that were bombarding my mind.

Then it was time to go into the operating room. I was led in, and to a chair seated directly aside the left side of my wife's head. I could see her tummy exposed from the mirror overhead, and they had already had an I.V. drip started. It was a chilling yet intriguing experience. I had seen this event before 12 years before, with my eldest Sons birth. But this was different, his Cesarean was planned, as he was overdue. My wife was still conscious enough to acknowledge me being there. I whispered something humorous to her in her ear. I told her that I was right beside her side. And that I wasn't going to leave her side, for any reason at all. Then the anesthetist told her she was going to be going to sleep now.

She mumbled something, and that was the last thing I heard her say for the next couple of hours. Then I could hear the doctors discussing the procedure and technique. I tried to listen to them as much as I could, but I was preoccupied with my wife's unconscious state. I had rarely seen her sleeping, in all our years together. She was resting now, and out cold, and she would be awakening to life, as a new Mom.

And I would be there to welcome her back to earth. This was no time for a Man to go missing or be at a ball game. This was my child being born, and my wife was having it. I wanted to feel everything that my wife felt, I wanted to be a part, and experience it all. I was convinced this would help, and to ease her stress during this time. So, I was committed to standing by her, no matter what the challenges with the pregnancy that could arise. I took a deep breath and tried to clear my head as I overheard the Doctors requesting tools from the staff. It was like a well-orchestrated symphony, the harmony of the team working on my wife. Everything was so perfectly executed, and I felt very comfortable then.

My wife looked so lovely to me, so precious in that state and so vulnerable too. But the peace and serenity was interrupted by the smell of an odor that nearly caused me to shake. I knew immediately what it was. They had started the procedure, and my wife's abdomen was exposed to access her womb, to get to the baby. I knew it wouldn't be much longer, before they had the child out, and into the world.

My second child was arriving, a Girl, to bring me joy, and to fulfill her Mother's dream. But wait, there was something wrong, I couldn't hear the child. I expected to hear my baby. As the team tended to close my wife up. One of the Nurses in the room, brought the little Angel over to me, to see. She was quiet, so little and so precious. And all swaddled up. I thought that she resembled my Sister. Then the honey moon was over.

The same nurse quickly and took Tabatha away, and begin the standard, "new baby procedures. I wanted my wife to be awake to witness what I had just beheld; the baby was so beautiful. Then the staff advised me of the protocols when a baby is born that early. Pulmonary, respiratory concerns being primary functions that concerned. Although Tabatha was a black female baby, which is the second strongest, next to white female babies, statistically. She still exhibited signs of respiratory distress, out of the womb, and the team acted accordingly.

They ushered the baby away, as I was told, to the "NIKU, (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit), wouldn't see her again for a day. My wife wouldn't see Tabetha for several days. But I knew the baby was a fighter, to begin with. I stayed with my wife in the recovery room. I told my wife how pretty the baby was, and that she looked normal. That evening, my wife was moving to a private room. It was cozy with lots of natural light.

I tried to play down the fact that Tabetha showed signs of respiratory distress, to her mom. I tried to keep her off the subject of the baby's circumstance. Although I wasn't aware of the baby's situation, I was hopeful that she was being taken care of, and that she was also well. I had this overwhelming peace about her and about her condition. Then the staff brought my wife into the recovery room, where I was there waiting for her.

Her blood pressure had stabilized, relatively right after the Cesarean. But she was experiencing a lot of pain after the surgery. They had started a morphine drip, (an epidural). That she could use on demand. My wife tried to handle the pain without it, but I told her it didn't make sense to. And that she should press the button to get some relief. She did, and then she dozed off, and into sleep. Later that evening, Dr. Grace came by. He had good news and bad.

I tried to prepare myself for the worst, yet expect the good. Being the hopeless optimist that I am. He explained to us that our baby was being cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care unit, (NIKU), and that it was because she was born so early, that it was the hospitals protocol, to care for her there. He assured us that she was receiving the best care possible. He said the NIKU doctors would be taking over primary care of Tabatha, and that she is in the best place for her care right now.

My wife who was awake now, and listening to every word he said, intently. He then explained to us that Tabatha would need significant Medical support while in the NIKU. And that the team in the NIKU would be monitoring her closely, and that it was too early to make any prognosis of, or predictions about her condition. He could only say, that she was stable at this point. Then I asked what the biggest concern that he had was. He said, "all of her primary organs".

He said her brain, her heart and lungs were all primary concerns. As they just haven't had enough time to develop yet, and that what was happening was a regular event for the staff. Then he said that he felt that Tabitha's chances for survival were very good. I didn't know what to say, in that moment, and I looked at my wife who was gently weeping now. But I knew I just couldn't fall apart, I had to be strong for her, and for our baby.

Doctor Grace said that the NIKU head would soon be in to speak with us, and with that he said good night to us. It had been a long day for Doctor Grace, and I was grateful for his care and intervention. He told us the NIKU Doctors would be taking over the primary care for the baby, and in the NIKU. I was never good at switching pain off and on, and compartmentalizing the situation was no different for me. I could show strength, but inside I was being torn into.

The news from Dr. Grace, from where I was sitting, was bad news. But I knew I had to look on the bright side of the situation, even during this very dark hour. I knew that I had to focus on the positive, and not the negative aspects of the things that were happening to us. I had to find some way to cope with it all. I needed a work around, because there was no way to make sense of it all. I told myself that it was just a part of life, and that mine wasn't perfect. Some-how I had to find the strength to get through it all, and believe that we would. Without knowing the future, and without having a good report from the doctor, I knew that I would just have to have faith.

I tried to console my wife as best I could, given the circumstance. Who would know what to say? But I knew that we needed to stick together, and become students of premature child birth and of preeclampsia; to get through the crisis. Even then, I considered how I might help someone, who might find themselves in the same situation. I knew that this experience was going to be a great learning experience for me.

That night, I stayed in the room with my wife, in a fold out chair by her side. She slept a lot that evening and I also managed to close my eyes for a couple of hours. I woke to the arising Sun, beaming through the window and with the thoughts of my new born daughter, on my mind. With the dawn of new day, I felt a new-found hope, concerning Tabettha and my wife. I knew that we could and would make it through this ordeal together as a family and with GODs help.

That day, after some preparation from the NIKU staff, I went to visit the baby. She was just as pretty as I remembered the night before. Just entangled, it seemed to me, by many wires and tubing. She was also on a respirator, and sedated. Which is standard protocol for a baby born that prematurely. To accommodate their little lungs, maturing. She didn't move very much at all. It was a pitiful site to see, but somehow, I was able to see life within the little bird with the broken wing. A little injured bird, in a secure bubble, in an isolated world. Where everything is controlled and monitored.

But I had hope that she would survive. Somehow, I saw a spark of light coming from her little body. I saw a little star twinkling, in that incubator. In the NIKU, there was light coming from the other incubators, each in their own very special way. Each baby had a story, each baby came from two parents, who were all now faced with the same challenge, as we were. The pain of not knowing their babies prognosis for the future, was frustrating, to say the least.

I was now part of a new kind of club, one where parents are held in limbo, in the very fragile and surreal world of Neonatal child care. Where we were subject to living day by day, and faced with making life and death decisions, for our baby. The staff had discussed with us, and warned us as best that they could. That statistically the fact that the babies that flourished were the ones that received the most interaction and attention. I wasn't going to fail at this. I didn't know if I would have the right sensitivity, but I was finally going to be able to caress my daughter's little chest. Although through a latex glove, in an incubator.

But I was going to try. I would have to be ever so gentle. Too much stimulation could cause an episode of her heart racing. I would use my index finger to caress her little sternum, ever so slightly. I knew she would know my voice. We had invested in a "prenatal preschool. An audio system for recording the parents' voices, and or soft music, played through the Mother's womb, to the baby. So, I felt I'd had a connection already with her. I would often say in years to come, she was the only female I thought that ever understood me. My beloved daughter.

So even with all the anxiety and pain that I felt at that moment because of the situation, I still had joy. I was so happy to be able to touch my baby, even if it was through a latex glove. I felt blessed to be able to experience being that close to my child. My newly born child. And as bad as she looked, I had hope for her future, and I was in love with this little lamb, the moment that I saw her, and even more now.

I knew it would be a challenge dealing with her, and I was in no way welcoming the situation. I was simply in it, and now trying get through it, and make some sense of it all. But there was no rational at the time, only the reality that my child was in a bubble dependent upon artificial life support. My wife, the woman I loved, had just had an unexpected delivery. She had yet to see her child, and I didn't know what to say to comfort her. The only place I knew to turn for strength and help, was GOD. So, I prayed, to the Lord for strength and understanding.



## Chapter 2: Quiet After The Storm.

The Niku Head Doctor, was in early the next morning making rounds and she stopped into my wife's room. She came in and introduced herself as Doctor Chase. My wife was still sleeping, but I didn't want her to miss Dr. Chases visit. So, I gently nudged her, and she slowly opened her eyes. It had been a rough night for my wife. It had been a night full of unexpected and unprecedented events. I was very sympathetic towards her, and I hoped that her pains had subsided.

She was just as beautiful to me that morning, as she had always been to me. I loved her even more now, that she had given me a child. And she had gone through so much, so far. Doctor Chase began the conversation by asking my wife, how she was. My wife responded with a gentle smile, and said nothing else. Dr. Chase then asked if I were the baby's Father?

To which I replied, with an affirming, "yes. Dr. Chase then began to discuss the facts and condition of our daughter. She said that Tabatha was stable, yet very dependent on the artificial lung support that was now receiving, a respirator, to assist with her lungs developing. Doctor Chase also expressed that there was concern about her other vital organs, as with most babies born as prematurely, as she was. So, they were taking all the necessary steps and precautions, including reserving the course of giving the baby blood transfusions if necessary. Which we condoned.

Doctor Chase tried her best to assure us that everything that was going on was, was to be expected with a baby being born, so soon, and that her prognosis thus far was good. But she advised us that Tabatha wasn't out of the woods as of yet. It was still too soon, and way too early to make any predictions. We would have to wait day by day for updates and new news about improvements to her condition. While hoping and praying for the best every day. With the ever-present threat that her situation could change dramatically, in a moment.

So, we were now slaves to the machines of the Niku. Subject to the beats and pulses of the numerous machines monitoring our baby's fragile life, and stuck in a proverbial pendulum in space, where time stands still. A place where life is so precious, and could be gone in the blink of an eye. Tabitha's survival was measured day by day. The odds were against her. But, I remained optimistic, and prayerful. I tried to remain cool under fire, but it was a lot to deal with, for anyone.

Especially for my wife. Who hadn't spoken very much since she'd been admitted to the hospital. I knew that it was a very stressful time for her. 9 Doctor Chase was very selective with her words towards us. And she tried to show as much empathy as she could. Given her position as the Chief Neonatal Physician. She had to be frank with us, yet sensitive to us.

As we were parents going through this very difficult situation. So with care, she told us in so many words, that Tabatha's chances for survival were good, at this point. But also, that there were still so many developmental hurdles that she would have to go through, still, and that we wouldn't be able to tell which areas she would be failing in, for weeks to come. Doctor Chase's words were sobering, and as we listened to her describe the things to expect, I began to sink down in the chair, and my stomach felt like I had swallowed a large rock. I was in a bit of a trance as she spoke. I had just seen the little bird only a few hours before, and now the Doctors words painted a very different picture, than the one that I had envisioned.

I saw Tabatha as a baby just needing assistance to get to the next level. But Doctor Chase's analogy was one of a child being on the brink of life and death. Even as we speak. Apparently, my perception of Tabatha, was completely inaccurate. I had had an over optimistic view of the situation. But I couldn't give up hope. I knew when I saw Tabatha, for the very first time, that she was a fighter. I knew that she was going to make it, I knew that she was strong, and she was my daughter.

Doctor Chase then began to describe a rough roadmap for Tabatha's development. She identified some of the milestones that were expected of her. Such as swallowing, and breathing without the assistance of a respirator. The goals were reasonable, she said. As she meets them, the dependencies would begin to diminish. She clarified the expectations that we should have for Tabatha. My wife and I both assured her, that we were on the same team, and that we supported the Doctors efforts, in her care for Tabatha.

Then, the Maternity ward Doctor arrives, and comes into the room. He introduces himself as Doctor Jones. The three of us acknowledged him, and then he began to confer with Dr. Chase. Regarding my wife's care. So far, my wife hadn't had any reoccurrences of spiking blood pressure. She had been resting relatively well, given the circumstances. But I knew the situation was causing her to feel anxiety and sadness. So, every few moments or so, I would look at her, and give her a little smile. The one she would always say, was a fake smile.

There wasn't much for my wife to do, at that point other than just rest and get better. She wouldn't be able to go to the Niku, for another 48 hours, while she was recovering. I knew the anticipation of seeing her new born, and first-born, child was mounting. But she would have to wait, as this was the Hospitals protocol. She was still bed ridden for the moment. So, she would have to be patient. I as well, would have to wait to experience my wife's first time seeing her baby. Our first time seeing her together, as a Family.

After the Doctors left the room, my wife asked me to go home and pick up a few things that she would need while in the hospital. There was nothing prepared, as everything had happened so suddenly. We talked a little while about the list of things, and then I made my way to the car, and headed for home. Driving home, it felt very odd. I felt like I was leaving a crime scene. I had this strange premonition that something was wrong. Like the quiet before a storm. But I made it home, within a half hour.

Walking into the house alone, was very weird. It felt like there had been uninvited guests in our home. I knew I needed to get my emotions and imagination under manners. So I took a few deep breaths, and exhaled out slowly. I realized in that moment, that I couldn't allow my imagination and negative thoughts, get the better of me. The reality was that the baby was here, and my wife was stable. I had much to be grateful for. So I put the fear and nervous feelings away, and gathered together the things my wife had requested.

I took a quick shower, and darted back out the door, to go back to the hospital, and as I did, I saw that my neighbor was outside. He said, "hey Mitch"! I didn't have the time to speak to him about the occurrences, of the last 48 hours. But I did yell out to him, as I got into the car, that the baby is here! He responded, "That's great, thank GOD"! I backed out into the road way from the driveway, then departed for the hospital. I had the same ominous feeling, heading back to the hospital. It was almost like a feeling of guilt for what was going on.

I thought that if I felt so bad, that my wife must've felt even worse. I realized those feelings of pessimism and fear were not of GOD. But simply normal feelings associated with what was going on. I realized I needed to get a hold of my thoughts, and not allow them to race. I had a long road to go with Tabatha, and this was not the time to fall apart. But, Man I sure needed a moment.