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As I Saw It: A Sighted Daughter's Memoir of Growing Up With Blind Parents

Laura Schriner

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Life didn't always go as planned for both my mom and my dad. Their early lives were testaments to their strength and perseverance in spite of the challenges that life brought them. My dad especially had it pretty rough with all the tragedies that came up in his life. He had to learn what he had control over so he knew what he could change and what he really didn't have control over so he could make peace with it and move on. My mom seemed more at peace knowing the difference and took life in stride, going with the flow of things, and accepting what came along.

I think that is what made their relationship work -- their differences. Their backgrounds with blindness were different. My dad had seen a world without blindness, and he was able to share it with my mom. My mom was able to share her calmness and ease of being blind with him. They enhanced each other's lives, and together they knew they could overcome any obstacles that came their way.
That is why starting a family seemed like the right choice for them. They knew they would have more challenges than just the ones that came along with raising kids. They would also have their blindness to deal with. The support they gave each other made the decision to start a family so much easier to make. The training at OCB gave them the confidence that they could handle any difficulties that came up in their lives and also in raising their children. Raising kids was no easy feat, especially with me, but they did it well. They wanted everything for us and didn't want us to go without like they had to growing up. They also didn't want their blindness to limit them or our family, so they took great strides to make sure that my brother and I had the best lives they could provide. We didn't go without. In fact, we usually had more than our friends did. We definitely had our parents' attention more than our friends because they made us the center of their lives when we were younger. As my brother and I got older, we got involved more with our friends and started doing our own things just like most teenagers. And that's when my parents became a lot more active too. They led fulfilled and happy lives keeping busy with all their activities, helping the community, and raising us. They created the family they didn't have when they were growing up.

More than just being very capable and independent people and parents, they were remarkable role models for my brother and me. It wasn't so much what they said to us, but how they lived their own lives that taught us. They showed us that we could do most anything if we really wanted to. They showed us that if we really put our minds to it, anything was achievable. They showed us also that life doesn't always go as planned, but that life goes on. They showed us that it isn't actually what happens to you in life, but how you handle it that makes your life what it is. They showed us by example. They showed us that the choice is ours to make.

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