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Iron Lung: A True Life Story

By Arthur Zulu

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She lived in an iron lung for most of her life. She inspired others. Who was she?

"Comfort don't ever leave me," she says to me as she struggles on her death bed. I hold her hands, trying to fight away tears from my eyes. Her struggle now becomes weaker and weaker. And then drawing a deep long breath, her eyes fixed on my face, she dies. The hospital attendants wheeled her away to the morgue. And I thought that the world had ended.

I worked for Hope as an attendant being a nursing-school student. I was taken aback when I first saw this woman living inside a tank called a respirator.

At first, I could not bring myself to ask her how she came into this. As time went by, however, we become familiar and talked freely together. Then one day when her husband came to see how she was doing, I asked the question directing it to no one in particular. I thought that her husband would provide the answer, but instead, it was Hope that started her story.

"One black winter morning in 1948 thirty six years after I was born in Los Angeles I discovered that I was stricken with the deadly polio." She swallowed hard and continues. "Things got bad quickly. From flu to paralysis and then to the hospital where I added up to several polio patients on the waiting list." She wanted to scratch herself but since she could not do it herself, she called my attention to it, which I did. And then she resumed her story.

"I was afraid. I thought that I was going to die. For I had to lie on my back on the floor of the crowded hospital waiting for an Iron lung. But it was long in coming. Breathing was hard. Then one day, I passed out. I did not know what happened afterward. Job will tell you the rest of the story.

"When Hope fainted, I didn't think that she would come back to life again" the husband continues. "The doctors must have been some kind of magicians because after one week, my wife started to breathe again. And before long, she was placed in the next available respirator, much to our relief.

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"These Iron lungs were at first thought to be a temporary invention helping patients to recover and breathe on their own later. But we discovered that the opposite was the case. Because these breathing machines were to become the permanent homes of many polio sufferers.

"Knowing this, I brought her home with the machine. And she has been living inside it for the past three decades" he ended and left the room, trying to hide his tears. I tried to fight back mine too. I was trying to really understand what it means to lie on one's back in one spot for over thirty years.

Her faith in God kept her going through the years. She was a very devout Christian and she believed that her suffering was only for a time. And she firmly believed that if she dies, she will be resurrected to

live again, pointing out what Jesus told Lazarus's sister, Martha at John 11: 25 .

I must confess that I was not a Christian when I started working for her. She was the one that preached to me and converted me to Christianity. And that was what she did to numerous other curious passersby and strangers who came to see her. Instead of being encouraged, she was the one that encouraged her sympathizers; and her faith in the Bible made many to become Christians. She was always praying to God in behalf of herself and others; and despite her condition, she was full of compassion for people. In fact, her courage inspired all who knew her.

Hope's only regret is in not being present at the wedding ceremonies of her two children. For she was in the respirator when the two teenagers became adults, married and had children. She only saw the wedding pictures.

In fact, it could be said of her that she is a cat with nine lives. Because on top of this, she had an emergency appendectomy without anesthetic when her appendix burst, endured cancer, had major surgeries and chronic skin disorders.

But there is a time for every affair under the heaven. Even a time to live and a time to die. So, one day she went for her seventh surgery. And after that she was removed from the Iron lung for the first time in 37 years, attached to a modern respirator using her tracheostomy, and placed on a hospital bed. She was not getting enough air. Fear gripped her. She knew she was going to die.

Three days later as she struggled for life, she spoke her last words to me : " Comfort, don't ever leave me." I nodded. I was holding her. I didn't want to cry. Then she died. Tears flowed freely. After one week, she was buried in the city cemetery. Wreaths of flowers covered her grave which was marked with the words: " Here lies one who waits upon the lord." Darkness falls on the cemetery. And we go home to mourn our beloved Hope.

Twenty years have passed now. I have since then grown from a lady to a married woman with a family. Perhaps she has been forgotten. But I still visit the grave yard on every anniversary of her death to lay wreaths of flowers on her tomb.

Today is another anniversary of her death. And I take a bouquet of flowers to lay on my friend's tomb. As I enter the cemetery, I raise my eyes toward the gate and I see the words of Solomon at Ecclesiastes

chapter 1 verse 2: THE GREATEST VANITY! EVERYTHING IS VANITY.

I walk ahead to the marked tomb with the epitaph: HERE LIES ONE WHO WAITS UPON THE LORD. I lay my wreath of flowers on Hope's tomb and sit to think of this loved one who suffered and died, waiting for the lord.

I was awoken from my meditation by a flash of lightning and the roaring of the thunder. I looked up. It was going to rain. I gather myself and kiss goodbye to Hope as I hurry home. As I go, I remember her last words and I was ashamed that I was leaving my friend. On my way, I walk pass the tombs of the governor, the slave, the Indian and the war veteran all vanities. I step outside the cemetery, look back and see those words again: THE GREATEST VANITY! EVERYTHING IS VANITY. But I remember Hope used to talk of a bright future in paradise where sickness and suffering will be gone. I was encouraged. So life may not be in vain after all.

She took ill one black winter morning. My resolve now is to be faithful to God so that I will meet my

friend during the resurrection in the coming new world. Then one bright summer evening we would gladly hold hands together as we walk through the gardens of paradise. And I will say to her: "I'm here, Hope. You see, I never left you."

ARTHUR ZULU, an editor and book reviewer is the author of the controversial book CHASING SHADOWS! : A Dream. (A book that reveals the terrorists' master plan to finally set the world on fire!) For a copy of the book and FREE excerpt, goto:
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For contacts, mailto: mostcontroversialwriter@yahoo.com

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Iron Supplement

By Rolf Rasmusson

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Iron supplement – why iron?

Why people need to use iron supplement? Well, there are many reasons. Iron is very important for our bodies and our health and when you do not get enough iron with your foods, the iron supplement comes to help. Iron is a very important mineral. It is an important component of proteins involved in oxygen transport and metabolism. Many trusted health organizations state that about 15 percent of your body's iron is stored for your body's future needs. That stored iron will be used when dietary intake is inadequate.

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Iron supplement – when to use.

There are multiple reasons that may require you to use iron supplement. You will have enough iron in your body if you are controlling the amount of iron that you get from food. Meat, fish, and poultry contain iron in them. That iron is easily absorbed by your body. The iron that is stored in plants (for example lentils and beans) is not as easily absorbed by your body as iron from meat and fish. If you don't intake enough iron with your foods, the iron supplement will definitely help.

Iron supplement – recommended dietary allowance for iron.

The recommended dietary allowance is the amount of iron (in foods, iron supplement, or both) that nearly everyone's body needs to receive daily. That amount varies with age and gender. For example, males in the age group of 19 – 50 years need to intake 8 milligrams of iron and females in the same age group need to intake 18 milligrams. For women who are pregnant the recommended dietary allowance will be different.

Iron supplement - facts.

Before you start taking some type of iron supplement, make sure that an appropriate diet is not enough to increase the intake of iron. Also consult with a doctor to see that using iron supplements is right for you. Iron supplements may cause nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhea, abdominal distress, or other effects. If you use some type of iron supplement, make sure that you use the correct dose.

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