

# The wave goodbye to my swimsuit

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The sun poured through the air, casting its rays on my tanning skin. I tilted my head up toward the cloudless, sapphire sky, hearing the hustling waves swim to the shore and slowly trickle back.

Children built sand castles and splashed in the waves, squealing when the unfamiliar water temperature froze their skin. Headphones in, reading a book, and wearing my sister's movie star sunglasses, I was perfectly content sprawled across the sand at this Cape Cod beach. As the ideal beach day progressed, the waves began to grow. Moms decided to pull their children out of the ocean in fear of the waves being too pernicious. Another had a panic attack because she thought her daughter had gotten lost in the crashing water. I sensed my dad staring at me.

Meeting his gaze, I knew what he was thinking. These were our kind of waves. Knowing my mom, sister, and aunt preferred to work on their tan than let their makeup run, we set out. Starting with the very tips of my toes, I worked my way deeper into the water. My dad, who was already drenched from head to toe, yelled for me to just get in already. Shaking my head, I took another step.

I liked to take my time. The sun was high in the sky by this time. Though partially obstructed by clouds, it made its presence well known by radiating its famous summer heat. Finally, I was in the ocean to my shoulders, and I was ready to begin my beach adventure. My dad likes to boogie board with the waves. But since we didn't have a board, he decided to just body surf.

With every passing second the waves grew stronger. They carried my father with power all the way to the shore. At first, I didn't see him; he was

completely surrounded by water. But then he emerged from the bank, and I breathed a sigh of relief. “ You should try it, Jamie,” he insisted, grinning as he made his way back to me. “ It’s a rush!” I shook my head.

“ I’m trying not to get my hair wet.” Right as the words flew out of my mouth, a wave wrestled me to the ocean floor. I did a forward roll in the water, salt water swimming into my nose and eyes, before I rose into the air. I tugged at my drenched hair and turned around to face my dad with a pout. “ So much for not getting my hair w—” I started to say, but was interrupted by another tumbling wave pounding me to below the surface.

I remained submerged for longer this time, swirling around uncontrollably. The crying ocean water surrounded my ears as I struggled to find air. When I finally surfaced, I felt discombobulated as my eyes rolled around in my head like a slot machine. My dad hurried to help me up. “ Are you okay?” I managed a weak nod as another wave rumbled past me.

Maybe it was my lack of consciousness at that moment, or the fact that a wave had just tackled me underwater for longer than was normal, but I started to feel a breeze on my chest — where I usually don’t. I saw my dad’s jaw drop at that moment. As I looked down, I imagine my expression matched his almost identically. Horrified, I realized that during my wave excursion, my bikini top had traveled all the way down to my waist. Scrambling to return my top to where it was originally designed for, I blushed a deep shade of red that no human has ever experienced before. I stared at the passing water, too humiliated to even look up.

“ Uh,” my dad stumbled for words. “ You, uh, want me to tighten that for you?” Nodding, I turned around and lifted up my hair, my cheeks burning. I swiveled my head toward the shore and saw my family doubled over laughing at the incident. Smiling, I started to chuckle to myself, as well. Sometimes, things are so embarrassing that they actually end up being a funny experience. The moment my dad finished tying my bathing suit top, I bounced back into the ocean, and we resumed our frolic in the waves.

My dad and I continued to have fun like before, though both secretly trying not to think about the topless incident. We eventually left when the waves really did become unsafe. When we returned to our beach chairs and umbrellas, I got teased for my bikini top while I rolled my eyes, trying to laugh along. I noticed my dad had uncomfortably slid into a chair to read a magazine. A lot of morals can be told of this experience, for example, always wear a one piece in times of vicious waves.

However, I think the most valuable lesson I learned from my horrible beach adventure was the ability to laugh at myself. I stood there, completely exposed to the world, with nothing but my shrinking dignity. But when I started laughing at the experience, I allowed myself to look at the situation through different eyes. That day, I gained self-confidence. I taught myself how to smile about something, instead of blush and hide in a hole.

But most of all, I learned how even the tiniest bit of laughter can change the way you remember something forever.