

Each morning for  
work and return late  
in



Each one of us has a different life and a different journey.

For some, the journey is easy and for others, very tough. Each one of us encounters some events which can alter the course of our life for better or for worse. These events, even the tough ones, can force one to personally grow and get a new understanding of oneself and others. The first decade of my life was fairly carefree. We were a normal happy family. My younger brother and I lived in Gurgaon with our parents.

Our mother, who was a homemaker, looked after us and pampered us while our father worked in a large multinational company. Sometimes things in life don't go as anticipated. When I was eleven years old, my mother was diagnosed with meningitis. Everybody in my family had thought that she would survive it. Unfortunately, she did not, and passed away very suddenly. This was an earth-shattering loss for me. It felt like I had survived a bullet piercing through my heart.

I transformed overnight from a child to a boy and forced myself to become emotionally and mentally stronger to take on life's challenges. I became more sensitively attached to my younger brother and my father. My younger brother missed our mother a lot and his grades in school plummeted. I helped my brother with his studies and also focused on my own education. Life gradually started becoming normal again. My father would leave early in the morning for work and return late in the evening.

After coming back home from school in the afternoon, I took care of myself and my younger brother. I played the role of my mother by providing mental

and emotional support to my younger brother and helped him with his homework. I even attended his parent-teacher meetings.

I helped him take decisions and tried to keep him cheerful and happy at all times. I realized how much we had taken our mother for granted and how much mental and physical comfort we had had just because of her. Just when I thought that I had already seen the worst in my life, my brother and I were faced with another nightmare.

Amidst my final year high school exams, just a day before my mathematics exam, my father committed suicide. This tragic incident left me in limbo. I was once again the same eleven years old I had once been. Now, however, I had no one left to seek help from. I was left all alone with my younger brother. I had no choice but to take the upcoming exams.

Somehow, I passed my final year board exams. I had to suddenly grow up again and evolve from an immature boy to a man. While graduating from high school, my classmates had the parental support to help them pursue their passions, plan exotic vacations, and buy hi-tech video-games. I, on the other hand, was figuring out how to cook food for my brother and myself. I began to live alone at home, shouldering all the household responsibilities from cooking, cleaning, educating my brother and myself. Now, I not only had to think about my future, but also about my brother's future.

Also, I was no longer just an elder brother to my sibling, but also, all that was left of his family. These events have completely changed me as a human being on a personal level. I have had to grow up overnight from a child to an

adolescent and then again from an adolescent to a man. I have become tough, resilient, independent and mentally strong.

In the past year, I have learned to manage our finances, do housework, cook and be a mentor to my younger brother. I am ready to face on any more challenges that life may throw at me head on.