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Roadside America

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A Ride in an Ambulance

As I stood on the lacrosse field in Virginia, adrenaline pumping through my veins, I felt invincible, ready to take on whatever challenge came my way. The sun was blazing overhead as I sprinted across the grass, playing my second game of the day while my parents were in a whole different state for my brother's tournament. Suddenly, in an instant that felt both surreal and excruciating, I collapsed to the ground, a sharp pain inflaming from my hip that knocked the breath out of me. The diagnosis came fast, a dislocated hip, something I never thought would happen to me. As they lifted me onto the stretcher, the world blurred around me, and I found myself in the back of an ambulance, while the sirens rang as loud as could be. In those moments, as the paramedics worked to keep me stable, I began to reflect deeply on my life, the dreams I chased, and the pressures I felt to succeed. It struck me that, lying on that stretcher, that my purpose wasn't just about winning games or impressing others, but it was about cherishing every moment, embracing my passions, and understanding that life is as fragile as it is beautiful.

Once I was lifted into the ambulance, I felt a reassuring presence beside me, my roommate's dad, who had rushed over to help. His steady voice helped ease my panic as the paramedics worked around me. Throughout the ride, he held my hand and shared stories about his own challenges, reminding me that I wasn't alone in this moment. Without his support, I

might have been left with fear, but instead, I learned what it truly means to help someone in need. His kindness and compassion became a powerful lesson, showing me that sometimes the greatest strength comes from being there for others, even when times are tough.

As the ambulance raced along the road, each bump sent waves of pain through my body, but it was the thoughts racing through my mind that truly took hold of me. I thought about all the hours I spent practicing, the games I'd played, and the victories I celebrated with my teammates and friends. I realized that in these moments, I sometimes lost sight of what really mattered to me. The joy of the game, the sportsmanship, and the support of my friends and family. With each heartbeat, I felt the weight of expectations pressing down on me, but I also understood that my worth wasn't defined by my performance on the field. Instead, I had the power to shape my own narrative, to find fulfillment in the journey, regardless of the obstacles. As the sirens wailed louder, I vowed to embrace the challenges ahead, not just as hurdles to overcome, but as opportunities for growth. This moment, painful and frightening, became a turning point, igniting a desire within me to live more fully and authentically, both on and off the field.

Throughout the ride, I realized how often I had taken the little things for granted, friendships, passions, and family. I learned that anything can happen at any time and it is very important to be thankful and grateful for the people close to you. In my relentless pursuit of success, I had also overlooked the simple joys that made playing lacrosse meaningful. It struck me that life is fragile. One moment, I was running freely, and the next, I was facing uncertainty. I thought of all the times I had complained about practice, wishing for a day off, when now I would give anything for just one more chance to play with my friends. This experience was a

harsh reminder to appreciate every moment, to savor the sportsmanship and the thrill of competition, rather than focusing solely on winning. I promised myself that when I recovered, I would approach each practice and game with a newfound appreciation, recognizing that it's the passion and the people around me that truly matter.

The ambulance ride, typically a moment marked by urgency, became a transformative experience that reshaped my perspective on everyday life. In a world driven by speed and constant movement, the simple act of being in that ambiance took on new meaning for me. It reminded me that moments of stillness, even amidst chaos, can foster reflection and connection. As I reflected back on this experience, I now realized that automobility isn't just about transportation, it's a journey that can lead to unexpected insights and emotional growth. What might seem like a routine drive can, in fact, change our understanding of life, helping us to embrace gratitude and compassion in our daily interactions.