

Kisha Taylor

Overcoming the Hand you were Dealt



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Overview

Choosing when, where or into what family you are born, is not an option. When you are born you are dealt a hand and that hand alone you must play. Everyone's journey is different however similar journeys leave foot prints.

What's awesome about foot prints is.... imagine if they were in a mind field you found yourself in? Could those foot prints save you time, energy and even your life?

Well this story is like having a set of foot prints that can save you time, energy and preserve your mental and emotional sanity. It is also a story that can allow you to understand that the mistakes you have made and the shame you felt, are not unique to you.

This book puts in perspective how family dynamics and learning life for yourself, without a guide, can lead you through a maze of hurt, shame and indecisiveness. Yet with passion, faith, determination and self love, you figure out you can overcome and have victory. " The greater the need to be....the more you fight to be free"

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Chapter One

Broken Beginnings

Life has a funny way of expressing itself. There are many people who have had various experiences that have either weakened them or strengthened them.

Think about Deja', a child born to Mia, a 17-year-old girl who had no identity of her own and was clueless about raising a child. Mia's relationship with her mom was not one of affection, support and closeness, and she did not know who her father was, either. Therefore, how could Mia know how to have a mother-daughter relationship with her new baby?

She left Deja' with her mom, Alma, until she was around two, and then decided she would take on the role of motherhood. That was when the journey began for Deja', who would have to face a world of heartache, pain, struggle, betrayal, abuse, and abandonment in order to get to accomplishments, blessings, peace and joy, all while getting to know herself and God. She led a life of trials and tests to overcome the hand that was dealt to her, and is still overcoming them to this day.

How many of you reading this can go back that far in your life and see where it all started for you? I believe you have to take the time to go back and see where it started for you and the experiences you had that set you on your

course, so you are then able to see what hand you were dealt and what your process was, is, or should be to get you to a place of peace and wholeness.

Now that I have your attention, and you have scanned your memory bank to get a view at your beginnings, let me give you a view of this young girl who is now 46. I will show you her journey in the hope that you can see yourself in her and some of what she overcame, to help you identify yourself and know you can also. Although she is still on her journey, you can relate and take away some things that she did—effectively and not so effectively—that can encourage you and allow you to give yourself credit for the things you did better, because if you are in any way like Deja', you are probably very hard on yourself. If not, then at minimum know that you are not alone, and with God all things are possible.

I am making this book simple, transparent and plain for you, in hopes that you see yourself in Deja' or share it with someone you know who will be strengthened by this young girl's journey.

Deja' had no father growing up and Mia, her mom, was 17. Her biological father was a petty thief who was killed by a cab driver when she was in Mia's womb. Deja' was born prematurely due to the stress placed on her mom. Ironically she was born with three 7s—the number of completion—in her birthdate. God put His stamp of completion on Deja' at birth.

Her father's family did not recognize Mia as someone significant in their son's life, so they just discarded her. Deja' never had a relationship with her father's family, and since he had a big family, 11 brothers and sisters, she grew up wondering if any man she dated could be her cousin or other family member.

Mia told Deja' that her father died in the military, so she would not feel she was worthless and born to a 17-year-old girl involved with a guy who did not care about her, and who was a street guy and killed because of his deeds. Her life started off with a lie about someone whose DNA was a part of who Deja' would be.

Deja's mom, Mia, struggled so much with identity and wanting to be accepted and loved due to her own broken relationship with her mom that it led her down a path of selfishness and neglect towards her own child. Deja' entered this world with no father and a broken mom who was just 17. Mia was running the street, leaving Deja' bouncing from pillar to post, putting her in situations that no young girl should ever be put in.

Mia was running numbers and experimenting with drugs, a path that led to addiction and further abandonment of Deja'. So, no father and a mom who was caught up in the street—what a hand to be dealt!

God made moves, though. Although Deja' was going from pillar to post, there were people who made positive, life-changing investments in her, in the midst of those who molested her, threw her away, and wrote her off, determined she would amount to nothing just like her mom. Either it was the father of one of the pillars, the son of one of the posts, neighbors, or people in the community.

There were also family members or those Deja' trusted who touched or spoke to her inappropriately. Although she was subjected to these things, God was still working and did not let any of these things destroy her.

Yes, Deja' suffered and was in pain a lot of her childhood, but she continued to have a dream and envisioned herself as successful in life. Her favorite show was *Little House On the Prairie*, which gave her a sense of

family, although it was a TV show. Deja' also had people on her journey that ushered her along.

How many of you can relate to this and put yourself in Deja's shoes with your own story, and go back and see how God was involved the whole time although you did not know it? Well, there was a grandmother, Alma, who was meek and prayerful. She trusted God and was able to share that with Deja' and it gave her strength.

Most people saw Alma as weak for the many mistakes she made in her own life early on, but she was strong in her belief in God's power to do anything, as He had kept her by His side and helped her through some really tough times in her life. This gave Deja' the belief that no matter what was going on, God would work it out. Thank God for Alma, because this helped Deja' not to give up.

We all have someone in our lives like that. What a blessing. Who was that for you?

There were also other people who helped Deja' on her journey. There was Teddy, her stepdad, who came into Mia's life when Deja' was two or three. He taught her how to be a lady and be feminine. Teddy was a caregiver; he made sure she bathed and had proper hygiene, that she had a meal to eat and knew how to dress properly. Although Mia was present and did give care, she was very inconsistent as a mom. In Deja's eyes, she was seen as ambitious and a fly girl.

Mia dressed really nicely, and had lots of friends who looked up to her. But that was Mia's priority and Deja' was not, and she always longed for Mia's love. However, Mia did, at an early age, give Deja' an example of leadership and mental strength. She would always buy her books to read. Encouraging reading is one of the best things you can do for a child. Once again, God was making moves.

Although Mia may have thought it was a way to get Deja' out of her face (at least this is what Deja' believed), she was actually building her mind.

Mia also sent Deja' away to summer camp for six weeks each year, which showed the young girl that there was more in the world than just the hood, or the block, or the local schoolyard.

No matter how much is bad, there is always some good. Remember that. Keep yourself in a place where nothing is wasted; take the good and throw away the bad. God does not waste anything, and neither should you.

There was also a godfather, James, who was a drug dealer and very street smart, who taught Deja' how to stand up for herself and know that she was special. He taught her how to command respect, respect herself, and to think for herself and be strong.

James would ask random math questions off the cuff, catching Deja' off guard, and if she answered correctly he would pull out a wad of money and give her a few dollars. He would give her riddles to figure out, and let her watch him interact with people, to show her how to talk to others and ask for what she wanted without fear. James taught Deja' that life was not fair, and that if she wanted anything in life, she would have to go get it without making excuses and fight for it if she had to.

Of course, Deja' was also able to see drug deals done, drugs being processed, guns, fights and lots of other negative things as well, but James always kept her focused on the positive.

He told Deja' she could be a lawyer because she asked lots of questions. He encouraged the good she could achieve, instead of glamorizing his lifestyle and what came with it.

I repeat, take the good and leave the bad, because being in this environment did cause Deja' to get shot at 12 years old. She was in the wrong place at the wrong time, receiving a wound that could have killed her—but it didn't.

She wore a cast from her hip to her toes for months, and was almost left back in seventh grade because of it. Deja' had to walk on crutches and get X-rays regularly to make sure the bullet did not move, as it was lodged between a bone and several nerves. It could not be removed without causing major damage, so to this day Deja' still has that bullet lodged in her bone.

Once the cast was removed, she had to go through lots of physical therapy to walk again. This was very hard for her, and people would make nicknames for Deja' like "peg leg" or "hopalong." Her mother Mia, however, was not light on the matter. Even with all her issues, she would sometimes take Deja's crutches and tell her to stop hopping and walk, because if she didn't, she would be hopping for the rest of her life. Deja', in pain and fear of falling, constantly tried to walk with full pressure on that leg and eventually was able to walk again.

Mia may not have been all things, but she was indeed a fighter, and made Deja' fight to walk.

There was also a godmother, Alice, unrelated to the godfather (that's how it is in the hood) but thank God for her. She lived in the same building as Mia and Deja', just a few floors down, and always would let Deja sleep at her house. She had two daughters, Debbie and Dawn, who were close to Deja's age, only a year apart.

Alice was a godsend; there were many days she found Deja' outside in front of the building, just sitting and waiting for Mia to come home, and it was after 11 PM

most times. Alice would bring her in the house and put her to bed with her own daughters.

It got to the point where, if Alice did not see Deja' outside, she would go up to the floor she lived on and find her sitting at the door or on the hallway window ledge late at night, and take her downstairs, feed her, and put her to bed.

I'm sure you are wondering "Where is Teddy, the stepdad who was the caregiver earlier in the story?" Well, of course, he wasn't squeaky clean either, and by this point he was not around anymore to provide stability, as he had an argument with someone in the street and shot them, and was in jail serving five years. Another loss for Deja, and of course at such a young age, five years sounded like 50 years.

Eventually due to the drugs and the street life, Mia was evicted and did not know where she would go or what to do with Deja'. But God had it that this young girl, after the marshals locked them out with all their belongings still inside the house, was headed to her grandmother's house.

She begged her mom to stop at the Chinese restaurant on the corner as they were leaving. Who did they run into, but Alice, her godmother. When she found out they had been evicted, she asked Mia, "What are you going to do with the child?" Mia said she did not know. Alice said, "Well, since she goes to school down the street, and she and my girls are like sisters, let her stay with me at least until school is finished and you get a place." Mia said yes.

Look at God!

With no papers of legal guardianship, Alice was able to mother Deja' for several years. Mia visited, but was too far in the streets to consider taking Deja' so the young girl was raised by her godmother Alice. Mia visited periodically,

and Deja' would spend time with her in the summers while also spending time with her grandmother, aunts and uncle.

Deja', Debbie and Dawn were close. Deja' was welcomed into the family as another sister. They were called the DDD sisters in the neighborhood. They went to the movies on the weekends and loved to go to the Sabrett frank shop to get hot dogs when they went shopping on Fulton Street in downtown Brooklyn. They didn't always have money to actually shop, but they window-shopped and it was a great getaway from the neighborhood.

They shared stories with each other and fought like cats and dogs, especially Deja' and Dawn, who were like twins. They looked alike and dressed alike. It's funny because people were convinced they were related by blood. Perhaps that was true, because they did all cut their fingers and rub them together to make it official, so they thought.

They shared many life experiences together, like first boyfriends, first heartbreaks, learning to ride the train and bus together. They loved to play outside and jump double dutch, play handball and race.

Going to New Jersey to visit family was a treat. They spent summers in Elizabeth, New Jersey and loved it. Although at times they fought, it was only because they had different personalities. Despite the arguments and fighting, they loved each other and took care of one another when any of them were sick or got hurt. They helped each other study for tests and celebrated each other's successes. They put up the tree together at Christmas and helped cook meals for Thanksgiving—well, Deja' and Dawn did. Cooking was not Debbie's strong suit. When Deja' got shot and wore a cast for several months, they each took turns with a wire hanger, sticking it inside the cast to scratch her itchy leg.

Alice was so involved in Deja's life that during that summer visit with Mia, when she got shot, Alice was ready to turn the hood upside down. When Deja' came home from the hospital, Alice came and got her in a cab because she did not drive and said, "She is coming home with me and I want someone to try to stop me!" As I stated earlier, she was a godsend.

Alice went to physical therapy with Deja along with Mia, and helped her adjust to school and life on crutches during those months. As I mentioned, Deja' was almost left back because the school did not have elevators; and she could not make it up and down several flights of steps daily. Thankfully there was a program called Gates, for kids who were technically left back due to poor grades. Although Deja' had good grades, she was able to participate because of her situation, and it was that which kept her from being left back.

Alice pushed Deja' to study hard for five months and take the test to advance. Deja passed, went on to eighth grade, and was able to graduate middle school on time with all her friends. Everyone needs support and Alice was definitely a support system for this young girl.

Alice did not have much by way of financial means, but did all she could as a single mother, raising three girls with their father living home sometimes but just as often not, until he was finally gone for good. She struggled financially to feed and clothe Debbie, Deja' and Dawn. They shared food often. Gravy and rice from the Chinese restaurant was a common meal, or four chicken wings and egg rolls, which was Deja's favorite. There were many days when they ate franks and beans or mayo sandwiches. But when Alice hit the number, it was like Christmas. They had sweet beef sausages from the meat market, the cabinets

and refrigerator were full of food, and each of the girls got to order whatever they wanted, without having to share.

Food stamps were what carried them from month to month, especially since there was another mouth to feed. Alice could not get any assistance for Deja' without any paperwork or legal guardianship. If she tried, the Bureau of Child Welfare (BCW) would try to put Deja' in foster care, as they had tried once before, due to a freak accident when she accidentally got burned.

BCW made it known that they planned to take Deja', although Alice begged them not to. Somehow, God supernaturally worked it out, in that for some reason the case worker never arrived to pick Deja' up, and they never heard from BCW again. So Alice did her best, financially, and worked it out without much help, except from Alma, the grandmother, who did what she could.

She loved those three girls, and was a strict mom. During the winter they had to be inside by the time the streetlights came on. If you are over 40, and lived in New York or up north, you for sure know what I mean. All you heard was Alice's loud voice in front of the building yelling, "Girls, girls, let's make it!" They knew what that meant and, embarrassed or not, they made it!

Alice did her best to be a protector and made sure she drilled family principles about decorum and morals into their heads. They prayed together during times of struggle and she would read encouraging scriptures to the girls when they would complain about their lack of material things. She would always encourage Deja' to walk with her head up and not drag her feet, because even though she did her best to mother this young girl, Deja' still knew she was the extra child, having to wear hand-me-downs and sometimes being treated differently by neighbors or

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Alice's family members. She did not always feel equal as a daughter. Therefore she always longed for her own mother and was sad a lot of the time.

Deja's self-esteem was challenged, and she felt abandoned and alone. *Little House On the Prairie* was her way of visualizing the family she wanted, and she was able to live it through that TV show. Deja' had other coping methods that helped her maintain a sense of stability and peace; even though it was fantasy-driven, it helped her maintain sanity and focus on the life she wanted, one she believed she could and would have.

"Overcoming the Hand You Were Dealt" is not just a story, but a true journey of overcoming that will provide you with tips and insight that will help guide you and save you time on your own journey to overcome.

Pick up a copy of "Overcoming the Hand You Were Dealt" or enroll in the complete mental mastery course "How To Shine Your Light After You Were Convinced It Was Put Out" to start your journey today - with me by your side the whole way!