

Die Strong

The story follows Lilian Brasch's inspirational and courageous journey...from childbirth to the stage at The Thoroughbred Center (Lexington, Kentucky) on September 26th (2021) in a bodybuilding competition.

Lilian (Lily) Brasch entered this world December 26th, 1999 (Chicago, Illinois) with an undiagnosed physical condition that left medical specialists offering little hope of reaching her 4th birthday.

Possessing only limited strength, Lily had a difficult time functioning. Whether it be rising from bed, or attempting to walk from point A to point B...it took a monumental effort!

Thankfully for Lily, she was raised in a close knit and loving Orthodox Jewish family (six siblings) which served as her pillar of existence.

Everyday activities, such as walking, lifting objects, and climbing stairs tested Lily's will and patience.

Her father, Dr. Joel Brasch (surgeon) took it upon himself to seek answers for Lily's condition by contacting physicians around the globe.

Lily's mother, Mary Anne (primary caregiver) provided understanding, nurturing, and alternatives in assisting her to enjoy a normal life.

Entering middle school, Lily was officially diagnosed with **centronuclear myopathy**...a rare disease associated with muscular dystrophy.

The good news, Lily would live. The bad news, her body was unable to develop muscle.

Lily was advised by medical experts not to lift weights or get involved with strenuous physical activities...the participation of which could result in long term or life threatening injuries.

This was devastating, since the only way that Lily could get stronger was to lift weights or exercise.

In high school, this led to depression which affected Lily's social life and resulted in plummeting grades.

Lily desperately wanted/needed to improve her physical strength. She was frustrated by the limitations placed on her by the so-called medical savants...especially those not allowing her to weight train.

Concerned with the mental torture, emotional pain, and physical distress (deterioration) that she was experiencing, Lily's father sat down with her and discussed (heart-to-heart) the dire situation.

Literally at a dead end, Lily expressed that she would rather risk her life by attempting to change it (by lifting weights) than to live in her current condition (without doing anything).

With Lily's mind made up, her father hired a personal trainer to work with her.

After some initial hiccups, Lily quickly found her rhythm. She enjoyed the challenge and the experience (euphoria) of weight training. The gym (once enemy territory) had become her safe haven from life's daily stressors.

Over the course of the next year, Lily became stronger. Yes, a movement...one of muscle (movement) had begun.

Lily's attitude (mental strength) and grades improved...she had hope!

She had begun to accept (devoid of bitterness) her condition and love herself!

Shortly thereafter, Lily acquired her driver's license. Lily's physical mobility was also increasing as climbing stairs was also a bit easier, and she was using her wheelchair much less.

After graduating from high school, Lily enrolled in college to study business.

Lily continued to blossom. Her beauty was both spiritual and physical.

Her body was taking shape! She had developed curves!

Still somewhat shy in nature, Lily was even being noticed and approached by suitors.

Lily was finding normalcy in all aspects of her life!

Lily's faith in God and herself, and determination to succeed were paying off!

Things were going well, but Lily wanted to "pay it forward". Lily knew there were others like her who had physical limitations (she didn't like using the word "disabled") that perhaps needed assistance.

Lily had conquered her fears and wanted to develop a platform to tell her story and inspire others.

What more could she do?

The answer, creating the Fallacy of Barriers Foundation...along with the message of Prove It!

Lily's vision was to become an advocate and public speaker to encourage others with her message.

Part of Lily's mission was to have a podcast that would interview inspirational individuals.

Lily's first guest was Zion Clark, who became internationally famous as a legless wrestler and wheelchair racing champion.

Lily was awed by Zion's confidence and choice to display his talents (athleticism) in front of a world audience.

It was after this interview that Lily decided she would follow Zion's example and compete...in bodybuilding.

At first glance, this idea seemed perhaps ridiculous, or impossible. How could a girl who couldn't form muscle participate in a bodybuilding contest?

The next question...why?

The answer: it would be the ultimate display of courage.

To well known philosophers and inventors, using one's imagination and dreaming are the first steps in creating what some people deem impossible.

With her adrenaline at maximum level, Lily surfed the internet and found a multitude of amateur bodybuilding competitions. The closest location was Oxford, Ohio on Saturday, October 16th.

Saturday is the Sabbath and not an option. Upon closer examination of all the competitions, EACH and EVERY one of them is held on a Saturday.

Yet another seemingly insurmountable obstacle...was Lily's dream, just that?

Disappointed, Lily speaks with her father about the situation.

In her 20 years on earth, Lily's family had always abided by the strict convictions of their faith which was to recognize the sacred observance of the Sabbath.

Lily reaches out to the promoter of the competition in Oxford, and explains her situation. The promoter is sympathetic and would allow Lily to forego the early judging and participate only in the evening show. However, there is no guarantee that the evening show (Lily's class on stage to perform their routines) will be at before the Sabbath is concluded.

To complicate matters, the bodybuilding competition has 2 parts to it in which contestants must participate. Prejudging is the first part which is held in the early afternoon. The 2nd part is held later in day/evening and is also when the winners are announced.

The official conclusion of the Sabbath is an hour after sundown, thus it is a tight window that Lily would have to fit into...things aren't looking good.

Dad agrees to support Lily, but reminds her of the risk she is taking. What if her class is called early...before the Sabbath is concluded?

Lily's mind begins to race. She reaches out again to the show's promoter and explains her dilemma. In a strange twist of fate, Lily learns of another bodybuilding event that has recently changed its venue from a Saturday...to a Sunday. Do you believe in miracles?!

Lily confirms this with the Sunday show's promoter...and it's a go for September 26th in Lexington, Kentucky!

Lily shares the good news with dad and family!

Lily informs her personal trainer, Tade of the competition. She also secures Dina...a figure, fitness, and nutrition specialist, to prepare her diet and work on specific poses (body awareness) necessary in the competition.

Lily assembles a group of wellness experts, including a psychologist/coach to assist in mental preparation (stress management/focus), and a homeopathic physician (holistic medicine).

Lily also puts together a production team (writer, director, DP etc.) to document her journey.

Lily's daily diary will also provide us with the roadmap of her innermost thoughts and feelings (apprehension, fears, determination etc.).

Lily's story is about one woman's courage to strengthen her mind...then challenge her body!

Lily's mindset was to take one difficult step, one difficult rep at a time.

“I want to serve as an example and a voice (ambassador) for others who seek to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.”

“Yes, we all have the choice to live weak...or DIE STRONG!”

“It’s all up to you!”

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