



Hair & make up by Amrin Mukhi

OVERCOMING THE ODDS

CAROL JAGTIANI WAS DECLARED DEAD ON ARRIVAL AT A HOSPITAL AFTER A HORRIFIC TRAIN ACCIDENT. SHE TELLS BINDU GOPAL RAO WHAT IT MEANS TO GET A SECOND CHANCE

When a college student meets with a bad accident that amputates her right leg, it is only natural that her whole world turns upside down. However, if that same girl beats all the odds to become a full-time practicing lawyer and a motivational speaker you know she is special – a word that describes Carol Jagtiani perfectly.

“My father is a Sindhi and my mother is from Nagaland where I was also born. I lived there until I was 15, after which I came to Mumbai for my higher education and then eventually 5 years of law school.” Carol’s happy-go-lucky life took a turn when she met with a terrible railway accident in her last year of law school. “As I was about to board the train, it started to move and I slipped and fell under the wheels. I was dragged until my right leg got cut off and I had a severe head injury too. I was rushed to Sion Hospital where I was actually declared dead on arrival,”



she shares of the chilling account.

Fortunately, a team of competent surgeons managed to revive her. “When I was told that my right leg had been amputated, my whole world came crashing down. My life had changed forever in a fraction of a second.” Carol remained hospitalized for four months and eventually got an artificial leg. Her family, admittedly, played the biggest role to help her recover from her trauma, as did a supportive set of friends who never made her feel like she had a disability.

After her accident in 2011, Carol was in acute depression and to help get out of her mental state, decided to work at her brother’s event company. “I pushed myself to go to work every day and focused on keeping my inner self positive in what was a terribly negative situation. As I started working, travelling, becoming financially independent, and doing everything that a normal person does I began to truly

realize that ‘my identity is who I choose to be and not my disability’. Acceptance is the first step towards positive change, and I accepted myself completely.”

“Then, in 2017, I got a call from the lawyer who was handling my railway case informing me that the government would compensate me. Even though I was reluctant initially, I decided to present my case and after just two hearings both within a year, I was compensated. “When I was at the hearing, I saw the other lawyers and was reminded that this is where I belonged. This is where I was supposed to be and now that I was in a better state mentally and physically I told myself that I would not let my disability stop me from pursuing what I wanted to do.”

While initially, it was a little hard for her to sit down, open her books, and study, Carol was surprised that she actually did recollect a lot and enjoyed the process. She then went on to give

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the All India Bar Council Examination and got her license to practice as a lawyer. “That is why I always say don’t be afraid to start all over again, as this time you are not starting from scratch but from experience. This incident taught me to have patience and the right attitude while you wait.”

She admits that when people call her an inspiration, it in turn inspires her to do better. “When you feel like your whole life is falling apart, it might actually all be falling into place. Trust your struggle, trust the process, and life will lead you to where you should be.” Carol has also recently embarked on her journey as a motivational speaker. “It amazes me to see the positive impact I am having on people and I see myself doing a lot more of this. I hope to be a voice for people with disabilities and help fight for their rights in our society.” The spunky woman hopes to soon run a marathon as well as sky dive. And we say amen to that!

