

Caroline Poole

Courage. I asked some of my friends who is the most courageous person they know. One of my friends talked about her uncle, who wasn't afraid to go to Iraq and fight for America. My neighbor spoke about her dad who is a firefighter and runs into burning buildings to save the lives of families. When I think about the most courageous person in my life, my friend Gabi immediately pops into my head. Every Sunday I go to her house and play with her. We have a very special friendship and I love to see her smile. It makes me remember how great life is.

Gabi has a form of muscular dystrophy called nemaline rod myopathy. She has trouble swallowing, moving her muscles, and sometimes even talking. Her misfortune has led her to the hospital on numerous occasions. Saliva clogs her throat, because she isn't able to swallow. Before she got a tracheotomy, a procedure on the trachea that allows a direct airway through the neck, she often turned blue and was rushed to the hospital. Now, a small snake-like tube slithers down her trachea to suction all the spit out of her throat. I remember the first time I saw her get suctioned. Her eyes rolled to the back of her head. I was scared, and I'm sure she was too.

However, Gabi is like any other eight year old girl. She is very intelligent and loves doing girly stuff. We paint our nails, listen to music, and talk about boys. Her disease does have a drawback. She isn't able to run at recess or in gym class. A nurse is always with her at school. In middle school, I thought it was difficult because my mom worked in the same building. I can't imagine having an adult be with you 24/7. Through all those trials though, amazingly, she is still able to look at life on the bright side.

Gabi has so many people that love her. She received so many gifts and visitors while in the hospital. When I saw that, I realized there is more love in the world than hate. I love her so much and I love seeing people show their love towards her. She deserves all the love in the world.

The most courageous person in my life is an eight year old girl who can't swallow, walk, and has trouble speaking. She isn't strong enough to fight in Iraq like my friend's uncle. She can't run into burning buildings like my friend's dad. She is courageous, because she perseveres through the test that God has set up for her. In a way, Gabi has helped my life like firemen and soldiers help others. When I visit her every Sunday I see her courage, and it reminds me to stay strong, and that people love me. I feel so selfish when I complain about stupid little things like being grounded, having a lot of homework, or having to go to my brother's wrestling matches. When life seems bad, it's really not. God has given us so many wonderful gifts; sometimes we just forget about them. Gabi's courage has taught me to be thankful, and I thank her every day. I also thank God, because he gave me the opportunity to get to know the most courageous eight year old girl who opened my eyes to see the world as a wonderful place.