

This I Believe

I believe in always going to family gatherings.

Growing up my family would take trips to the beach almost every Sunday, even on the rainiest days. My mom and sisters would prep the food as I gathered my toys and swimming gear. As a child, I never understood the importance of our family gatherings. All I knew was that it was a day filled with tons of fun and good food.

One weekend, my mom and sister had gotten into a disagreement, and from that weekend on things weren't as they used to be. The tradition we once had, had suddenly come to a stop and my older siblings weren't around as often.

It was not until recent years that my family was able to rekindle our traditional family gatherings. Although, instead of the beach, we would have them at home. Despite being reunited as a family, there was always one person missing from these gatherings, my sister Kish. I never really got a good explanation as to why she never showed up. I just knew that she would eventually come around.

In the year 2019, we received the worst news our family could ever receive. My eldest sister was diagnosed with oral cancer and was set for immediate surgery. I took every gathering possible as a chance to spend time with her. The most surprising thing was that Kish was starting to come around too.

The beginning of 2020 had soon come around, and my sister was finally home. Kish was barely around, although typical, it seemed a bit odd.

Fast forward to March, my shift at work had seemed a bit unusual. A few moments later my boyfriend came rushing into the store. Kish was being held hostage at gunpoint and had been forced to follow her hostage-taker. I was instantly released from my shift and headed straight to San Antonio.

On the third day of being held hostage, I was at home getting my rest for the next day of work. My uncle banged on my window, only informing me that my sister had been shot to death by untrained police. I was in a state of disbelief and ran around trying to find a ride to the hospital as quickly as possible.

During my sister's last moment in life, we were unable to see her. We did not have the chance to tell her how much we loved her or how we wished she was around more. She was gone forever. It broke my heart.

I never took another family gathering for granted after that day. Every moment I spent with my loved ones was cherished and filled with happiness. I believe that even when I am the busiest person on earth and have little time to myself, I will always make time for my family. I believe in always putting my best foot forward into making memories with one another because I'll never know if it's the last time I will see them again. The building blocks of a great family are the times spent together.