

I Am a Miracle: *Baby Brandon*

By Rita Kluny, RN, BSN, HTCP/I, HNC

In the nineties, I worked in a regional neonatal intensive care unit as a registered nurse, and saw the worst of the worst case scenarios, from congenital conditions to birth complications. Most of our tiny patients stayed with us for months.

One of my most memorable patients was sweet beloved Brandon. Born premature, he not only had lung disease that kept him on a ventilator for months, but also, many bone deformities that added to his distress. He was born in July in a tiny rural hospital. During the delivery, someone accidentally broke his legs trying to straighten them, not realizing that his legs were malformed.

As a result, his first weeks were wracked with pain. It was hard to make him comfortable. He was always irritable, hard to calm, and salivated a lot, creating the need to frequently re-tape the tube that attached him to his breathing machine. My heart went out to him. I had severe scoliosis as a preteen, and I knew his pain. It really touched me. He was not an easy patient in the beginning. However, at the time, I was a Healing Touch student, eager to try my healing skills on someone who would benefit.

Healing Touch was fairly new twenty years ago - not too many people knew about. Some nurses were even getting fired "for healing" in the hospital. Strange but true. Most of the nurses with whom I worked thought I was from the moon, but they at least let me do what I do. I used to tell them that the worst thing that could happen was nothing.

Brandon received Healing Touch treatments every day, several times a day when I took care of him. On days when I had other babies, I would sit and talk to him. As his condition improved, he developed the sweetest personality, always smiling and laughing in response to any attention. In fact, he became the unit "mascot," and everyone started carrying him around, buying him clothes, toys, little books. I have a picture of him with my

monkey puppet, and they are both the same size in the picture, that is how little he was.

Weeks turned into months, and he actually was doing really well during the periods he was off the ventilator. More time to spend in someone's arms! By now he had graduated to using a tracheostomy because his condition had warranted it. He was stable, but he still had moments where he would hold his breath and turn blue when he was upset. It is so amazing that no matter how small babies are, their personalities are intrinsically up and running. He had an amazingly strong spirit, which was obvious by how much he had already endured and survived. Life is pretty hard without your mom, just as a normal baby, but to be in pain, and away from home? No wonder he turned blue! Fortunately, Healing Touch seemed to help him.

We often wondered why his family never came. We knew that mom was a teen, could not drive, and lived about five hours away. A long drive for sure -- but for months without visits? We heard rumors about how the mom's parents were not supportive enough to drive her to the big city, but we didn't know if this was true. We simply never really knew much about his family. Until the holidays came. I had been shopping for presents when I saw a small Santa suit. I bought it for Brandon. On Christmas day, I dressed him and paraded him around the unit. He loved the whole ritual; we all got a lot of laughs from him. And us!

In the afternoon, Brandon's mom and grandparents arrived. I could see how stunned they were when they saw this Santa baby all grown up in his bigger crib. They were a bit formal at first, after all, he was a stranger to them. It was quite apparent though how captivated they were by his personality. He melted their hesitance and brought them into his heart. By the end of the shift, they were all relaxed, relieved and in love.

I remember how many times I held him, assuring him that if they only knew how sweet he was, they would be remorseful

about not visiting. I told him that it is pretty rough to be alone, but that God was in his heart, and that the angels were with him, and that he had a big enough heart to forgive his family for not being around. "Maybe some day they will realize what a blessing you are. You have been a blessing for me, for sure!"

So I watched this family tableau, of yet another unconditional infant opening his heart, knowing, remembering. His family arranged to stay in town with friends of a friend. They learned how to take care of Brandon's tracheostomy and his home ventilator. They all went home weeks later, with big smiles and gratitude from his mom and grandparents.

Fast forward three years: I hadn't seen Brandon for years, and here he was, now in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), recovering from hip/leg surgery. The doctors took precautions to keep him overnight because of his history of lung disease. He was doing well. I was so happy to see him, he was such a big boy now! It felt like he recognized my voice, and I talked to him for quite awhile. He was awake and alert, and in no apparent distress, ready to charm anyone who walked past his bedside.

Next to him, I was caring for another baby. I do not remember what she had, but I do remember she was very uncomfortable and crying. I started to give her a Healing Touch treatment. As I passed my hands over her energy, I spoke soft words of encouragement, telling her that she would heal quickly, and that her life was in God's hands. In the middle of this interaction, Brandon's grandfather had come into the room. As he silently watched me, I acknowledged him with a nod but felt a bit self-conscious. I actually thought about stopping, but decided that the baby needed what I was doing, so I continued. Eventually she fell asleep.

I went over to greet him and update him on Brandon's night. He looked at me, and asked, "What were you doing over there, to that baby?"

"Healing Touch - you familiar with it? It helps to calm and relax, gives them their best shot at recovering."

He nodded thoughtfully. He looked at Brandon, then back at me, and asked, "Did you do that to my boy?"

"From Day One. I loved your little guy. Still do."

His eyes welled with tears. "We thank you so much."

My eyes teared as well. I had flashes of scenes of caring for Brandon as a baby, and me realizing that Divine Providence provided him with guardian angels, along with the other nurses, to nurture and love -- and receive back this huge heart that lived in a broken body. A body that was growing and healing -- the heart and soul within so accepting - so unconditional - so enduring.

We all learned from him about the power of Love and how some miracles may take time, but they are miracles all the same.

About the author:



Rita is certified in holistic nursing and has been teaching Healing Touch since 1993. She was fortunate to have taken all her HT workshops with Janet Mentgen and is an elder in the program. 1994 Holistic Nurse of the Year.

Rita is also certified in Holistic Nursing and was honored by the American Holistic Nurses Association as their She introduced Healing Touch into the Omega Institute for the Holistic Studies' Wellness Center, where she spent seven seasons giving private sessions to staff and workshop attendees of all ages.

Rita's true passion is to give babies the best start in life. As the founder of Healing Touch for Babies, her vision is to see HTB integrated into all areas of prenatal and perinatal care, and to empower moms to experience the value of self-care and prenatal bonding during pregnancy. Rita is an active member of the American Holistic Nurses Association, Healing Touch Professional Association, and the Association for Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology and Health. She has written many articles on healing, some of which you can find in the archives of ***Energy Magazine***. She is also a contributor in the **Healing Touch Guidebook**, and **Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul, 1st edition**.