Good Morning,

One of my favorite things about Priory is Chapel. It reminds me of being crammed in the family car on a road trip. While elbowing each other for more space, we would sing and tell stories, tease, laugh, yell and just be together.

The story I wanted to share with you today is one that I learned a lesson from; the kind of “a-ha – I’m never going to forget the way I’m feeling right now” lesson

My husband and I met at Wash U where we were both in the Engineering School. We found out we were expecting our first daughter while we were just 22. I was finishing up the final of my three bachelors and he was working on his masters degree. When you are 22, it seems like almost anything is doable and her due date was mid May so one semester pregnant and one with a newborn sound hard but we were strong. I was already used to alternating studies with a job and managing on very little sleep so how much worse could it be? It was hard – walking around campus with a backpack while in your third trimester was exhausting and fitting into those old-style desks was a joke and if fighting for gender equality in a male-dominated field was tough before, this experience raised it to a whole other level.

However, I made it through my classes, finished my final exams and was ready to focus on just being a new mom for the summer. Only… she wasn’t ready. Twenty years ago c-sections and inducing labor was reserved for cases of “need” and my “needing” to get this over with didn’t fit the doctor’s criteria. So we waited. Only…Faisal had an internship at NASA working on signal analysis from the Hubble Space telescope and his start date was set for late May. He called once, they were nice; he called a week later and they were still nice, but not very flexible. We needed the money so he hugged me and said “Just wait, I’ll be back on the weekend” as he flew out. She was born on a Wednesday….

Fast forward five years, expecting our second daughter. I wanted everything to be perfect his time. Faisal squeezed business trips in and I got the nursery ready and took Abby to the “Big Sister” camp at the hospital and stocked the house and basically anything else I could think of so we could totally relax and be ‘present’ for each precious moment. Only… somehow on his last trip Faisal had been exposed to chicken pox. It’s not a common childhood illness in Pakistan where he grew up so just days before the due date, he broke out in spots. I was sooooo mad… this was supposed to be my time to put my feet up and get back rubs and instead I was running oatmeal baths and smearing calamine lotion on him.

Once again the baby was running late but this time I was glad and hoping he could recover in time to come to the hospital with me. After a check-up appointment, I returned home feeling very put out and sorry for myself only to find Abby sprawled on the floor watching cartoons, the floor littered with juice boxes and goldfish and gummie snacks. “Where’s your dad?” “He’s locked the door and won’t let me in.” He was so miserable, hopping from one foot to the other and I had my a-ha moment – this was not all about me….

The Problem:

\*  It is not so enlightening to focus on control issues, though true, they were not really what was so hard for me to deal with

\*  Instead, it was my expectations that were problematic – reference back to “hope deferred maketh the heart sick…”

\*  Real root of the problem wasn't the expectation of how things would play out but the expectation that this was supposed to be all about me

The Point:

\* One of our core values is individuality, but not because you yourself are the super star – we value individual God-given talents and gifts because of what they bring to the community – remember Mr. Molak’s message “you’re not that special”

\*  There is a social norm that sometimes it’s ok to ‘let down your hair’  or that there are some exemptions to the 'don’t be selfish' rule such as birthdays, marriage, graduation – we’ve all heard the term “Bridezilla”

\* This is not to say that you shouldn’t speak up about what you need or how you are feeling. Taking care of yourself is vital and actually one of the best things you can do for the health of the entire community.

\*  Punch line: It is never all about you – this is not to say that you shouldn’t take joy in special occasions but that that honor, recognition, love and affection should be offered to you and not demanded or assumed from you.  This is how community was meant to be lived.  When all are welcome, when all are valued, we don’t have to protect our individuality, it will be celebrated within the context of our community.

\*  Challenge: recognize the feeling of injustice (what does that look/sound/feel like) and name one or two other people affected/involved in situation. Often, just naming another person shifts the narrative, like in a plot twist.  Alternately, create a catch-phrase (feel free to borrow mine) like "It's never all about me..."