

Transcript of Compelling Stories - Episode 1

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KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Welcome to episode one of “Compelling Stories,” a series of inspirational interviews with students who have overcome adversity, to not only survive, but to succeed in making their dreams come true. In today’s show, we talk with senior broadcasting major, Anine Stanley. Anine discusses her troubles while growing up and the difficulties of becoming a teen parent. She talks about how her son, her family and race walking play important roles in helping her overcome adversity and strive for success.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Well Anine, I’m interested in getting to know a little bit more about you today. So, where are you from?

ANINE STANLEY: I’m from Queens, New York.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Live there all your life?

ANINE STANLEY: I lived in the Bronx for years and then I moved to Queens when I was younger.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So, it’s a big contrast from coming from the city to Mansfield.

ANINE STANLEY: You better believe it.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So, tell me a little about yourself, tell me about what it was like growing up, living in the city.

ANINE STANLEY: Well coming from the city, you’re used to everything being a fast pace. So, me coming to Mansfield or just coming out of the city to go anywhere it’s, like, a little out of the ordinary. I’ve got to get adjusted to a lot of things very quickly, because there’s, like, I’m used to everything being next to me, like all the time and like, now it’s just like, Okay, there’s nothing here. So,...

I had kind of a rough childhood, but, just like everybody’s is in the city. It’s just a basic trend. I’m still living so, everything is good then.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Your childhood was kind of rough?

ANINE STANLEY: Yeah.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So...

ANINE STANLEY: You know, people die. You know, I lost a lot of friends, gained a lot of friends. It’s just like it’s a whole cycle, so, just like everybody else though.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: What is, like, your greatest memory, or that you can remember from when you were a child running around?

ANINE STANLEY: I guess my greatest memory was to me, for me to be an athlete. Ever since I was five years old been in track and field and I used to write in diaries and stuff like this and my mother still has them to this day. And I’ve always told myself that I was going to make it to the Olympics, at least once in my life. Even to the trials and at that point in time my race was the 800, because I used to be a runner. But now, when I got older I just like, I stopped running and I got into race walking. Now, that’s my goal, is to make it into the Olympics with the race walk.

Track and field was like my number one goal. I used to dance too but, I just like track better. Like, everything, the atmosphere of track and field, just being around people who like track. The whole thing

just hypes you up. So, like, I've just been around that forever, so it's just like, that's like my second home.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So did your family get you involved in track? Or, did they do track?

ANINE STANLEY: Well, basically, the reason why, 'cause my mom used to run and then my dad was just like, he was an all around sports person. He played basketball, baseball and he did football. So I was like, we had to do some type of running. And then we used to run from beatings. So my mother noticed how fast we were, so she was just like, "We need to do something." So she was just like, let's go to the track team. We saw a track team at our local community center and we just joined it and then from then on, that's how it's been.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Tell me a little more, like I'm interested to know more about your family. Tell me about do you have siblings? How was it growing up with siblings? Let me hear more about family life, with Anine.

ANINE STANLEY: Well, two older sisters, they're twins, and I have a younger brother. And growing up with me being the middle child was kind of hectic, because I always get, like, the hand me downs, pretty much. Whatever my sisters couldn't fit, I had to take. Or my mother would try to dress us all alike, which I used to hate because I'm not a twin. I'm by myself, and like, my whole life pretty much, I try to be an individual.

I try to separate myself from my sisters, but my mother, just kept constantly pushing me with them. I went to every single school with them, from elementary school to high school. We've been in everywhere together, track meets we was together. We was always together, like our family was very close. And we still are close, just the only thing is, I'm the only one that's still competing, as of like being an athlete. But, they're very supportive when it comes to that.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Can you think back to the very moment when you said that, "I not only need to, but, I have to go to college." Can you describe that moment for me?

ANINE STANLEY: Well, me being a teen parent, I've... I got pregnant in high school, and my senior year I had my son, four months before graduation. Basically when I found out I got pregnant I wasn't even thinking about college. I was just thing about I've got to get a job. Towards graduation time, like, after I had him and you know, everyone's coming up to graduation, I didn't register for any schools. Everybody, all my other friends were like, yeah, I registered to this school... and I didn't do anything.

And it wasn't until, I think like the week before graduation and I spoke to my guidance councilor and me and her just sat down and had like, an hour talk. She was just like, "You basically need to do something, Anine. Like what do you want to do with yourself after you graduate high school? Are you going to work? Are you going to go to school? I think you should go to school." Because I've known her, my guidance councilor, I've known her since my freshman year, so, and me and her have been close. So she, and we used to go to the same church together. So I was like, she knows me more then anybody else knows me, and... besides my family. So, she was just basically telling me Anine, you got to do something. You know, you've got a child now, so, you've got to think about what's best for the child.

I sat out my first six months after graduation, and I just sat and I thought. I was just thinking about stuff and I was just thinking and thinking and thinking. I was just, like, what should I do? I wasn't working, I wasn't doing anything and I wanted to go to school and I wanted to still do track. That's when I decided I need to go to college. I need to go to college.

So I applied for a school, Lindsey Wilson college in Columbia, Kentucky, and they accepted me. And I went that January 2005.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: You picked the first school. [laughs] You really wanted to go to college.

ANINE STANLEY: Well, it wasn't really my choice, my first choice. I just wanted to choose a school

that I could do race walking in. I went on this race walking website and they gave me a list of all these schools. I really did not want to go to school in New York City because I knew I wouldn't have been focused. Because it's so close to home and I didn't want to stay at home. That was the number one thing. I applied to maybe, like five schools, race walking schools, and three got back to me. But they were so far away and I didn't want to go that far. I know Kentucky is far away, but it's only two hours on a plane. So, I was just like, okay. I spoke to the coach; I went out there to visit. I liked the atmosphere, so I just decided to go.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Now rewinding back a little bit, you said that you got pregnant in high school. What was that moment like? How was your family during that time? Were they very supportive or...?

ANINE STANLEY: Well, basically it was a surprise pregnancy. My sister just finished having a baby seven months before I actually had my son. Our children are seven months apart. When we, I was at her baby shower I found out that I was pregnant and I was two months pregnant at her baby shower. So I was like, at first I didn't know what to do, I didn't know if I was going to tell my mom or not. But, it was like, when I told everybody, everybody was just like, "Okay, like, what you gonna do now?" Because, pretty much all the girls in my family had babies now. So, I was just like, I was the last one. And it was just crazy when it happened, and I didn't even know like, what to do. I didn't know, I was just confused about everything.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So how is it now? That, having your son? He's how old now?

ANINE STANLEY: He's four, well he'll be four years old in February 24, 25. Sorry.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: You're both February babies.

ANINE STANLEY: Yes, unfortunately, yes we are.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: What are some of the obstacles that you've had to overcome to attend college? Like you know, you said you got pregnant and then you went to Lindsey Wilson, but was there any obstacles, like money wise, financial wise?

ANINE STANLEY: Well, Lindsey Wilson, they basically paid my tuition. So, and financial aid, since I'm an independent student, because I have a child. That just, like, set it off, so I didn't even have to pay anything for school. Just basically for books.

But probably the hardest thing for me to do was to leave my child at home. My mother and my father decided that if you want to be a full time athlete and a full time student, it'd going to be pretty hard for you to raise your child alone. And then especially when his father is in the Army and it's like they believe, they have contact, but they don't really have that much contact. So it's just like, "We want him to stay here with us, and you go and do what you have to do. But just know that, you know what I mean, that he's always going to be here for you. He knows who you are and this, that, and the other." That was probably the hardest thing for me to do was to leave him. I left him with my parents when he was eleven months.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Wow.

ANINE STANLEY: Like, traveling back and forth, it was kind of hard for me. Like, I had my moments when I broke down, I broke down at least five times, just going home and coming back alone, because I just felt like I was abandoning him because I wasn't there for him. But, I guess now it's like, as I see him get older, and like he's doing different things, and he notices a lot things. Like, he's getting more wise to me, and I know that he knows what's going on and it's easy for me to keep in contact with him. It's easy for me to talk to him, because he's very knowledgeable. He knows a lot to be somebody, who's really young, he knows a lot. He's a very, very smart kid. So he knows like, mommy has to go to school. So when I talk to him, he's like, "Okay mommy, well do your work and I'll talk to you later."

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Awww

ANINE STANLEY: “I love you.” Like, he knows like, mommy has to do the work, mommy’s doing this for him. He knows that. So, when I graduate it’s going to be like the biggest thing for me, well it’s not really going to be for me. It’s going to be for him. Everything I’m doing is for him, but the track thing is something that I wanted for myself. And I felt like I’m not going to give up my dream because I had my baby. I don’t look at it like it’s hindering me, I look at it as a blessing, because...

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Yeah.

ANINE STANLEY: Ever since I had him, I felt so much better about myself, and it’s like he’s a piece of me that I will never want to give up. And, like, I would feel bad if I did get an abortion, which, I don’t believe in them anyway. But thank God I didn’t, and he’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: You’re very blessed to have very supportive parents that are there for you and... Because there’s a lot of girls out there that their parents would be like, “Oh, you’re pregnant? Oh well. You ain’t going to school.” And it’s a true blessing to have parents that are right there for you and take care of you, and taking care of your son while you’re here.

ANINE STANLEY: I mean it wasn’t always that easy, trust and believe. I ...

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: It wasn’t always that easy?

ANINE STANLEY: It wasn’t always that easy, like I had to do a lot of convincing, a lot of talking, because my father is very steadfast. Like, he’s very stuck in his ways, and he was the main problem with me when I told him I was pregnant. Because he didn’t want nothing to do with it. He didn’t want nothing to do with me for awhile. But it just, I guess it grew on him, especially when I was having a boy. That made me even better, because our family is known for having so many females.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: [Laughs]

ANINE STANLEY: So it was like, once I told him I was having a boy, his whole attitude changed and he wanted to be involved. So, I was like, I don’t know. Maybe if I had had a girl, it would be different, but I think God gave me what I thought I can handle.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: [Laughs]

ANINE STANLEY: Because I don’t think I could handle a girl. I know I can definitely handle a boy.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: But your dad eased off because he found he was having a little grandson?

ANINE STANLEY: Yeah.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: [Laughs]

ANINE STANLEY: Everything changed.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: That’s a big seller. So, when reflecting back on your journey, do you think that you would end up where you are today, in the place that you are today?

ANINE STANLEY: Well maybe if I didn’t have the mind set up that I have, I probably wouldn’t have. I have a lot of family members who have kids and it’s just like they’re stuck. They’re stuck and they don’t know what to do. They can’t move on, like they’re not in school, or at least they were in school and now they’re not in school anymore. Or they had this job, but now they don’t want it, so they’re going to quit and get another job.

It’s like, I didn’t want to do that. I wanted to finish school, get my degree, and then do what I have to do

for a job. So, I know I will have that steady income. I don't like to work in retail or stuff, that's minimum wage stuff, and I know I can't get by off of that. And I know my child can't either.

And, I didn't want to do welfare, I didn't want to do none of that stuff. I mean, I know I started out doing it, but with the help of my family everything changed. So, I really didn't want to do it, and that's something I don't want to do. And, even when I graduate, I'm trying not to do that. Hopefully my internship goes well, so everything will go fly and I could get a good job, so I don't have to worry about that type of situation, because that's just headaches and people in your business all the time. It's just not good.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: Now through all the ups and downs that you've experienced, you know, and the changes, what has inspired you to keep going.

ANINE STANLEY: Well basically, my son inspires me, and I try and inspire myself. Basically with the race walking and stuff, it's something that I want to do. I have a drive for it, I have the motivation for it. I've loved race walking since the first time I've seen it when I was eleven years old. Then, every time I see it, and every time I do it and every race I do, I just keep, hopefully I just keep getting better and better.

But, if not, I just like doing it, it's just something that I love to do. I'm very dedicated when it comes to it. Even though others may think I'm not, I try to do my best in everything I do. I try to motivate myself in school, because I know this is not the end for me. I have a higher calling so I know that this ain't the end for Anine. Hopefully ya'll see me in the Olympics. Hopefully I'll be doing a good job. Hopefully I'll be on TV one day, all right? I have a lot of dreams that I haven't concurred myself. And since me, since I had to grow up so quickly, by me having a child, I've had my childhood actually, like, shot, since I was 17. So, I'm not saying that I want to live back my 17 years, but as a 22 year old now, I'm trying to grow, I'm still trying to develop. There still things that I'm still not quite there on, but everything takes time.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So, as I'm hearing you speak today, I hear, like your mom, your dad and your sisters, so what is it like to have that support system? Is it just, like, your family? Is it your friends or is it coaches? Because I know you say you're involved in track, that they push you a little bit more when you get those moments that 'Oh, I don't feel like doing this today.' Or, you know...

ANINE STANLEY: Well there's basically two people that I, before I met any of my friends, they were always there for me. That's my mom, which is my number one person who pushes me the most. And my coach at home, his name is Charles Wheats. This man, I done been through thick and thin with him. I've known him since I was seven years old, and he till this day, curses me out, every time I talk to him.

And, oh, if I tell him about a race I did that was crappy, or whatever, he's like, he's been pretty much my father, father, besides my real father. It's like I can basically tell him anything, and anything that I need, if he can get it, he'll get it with no problem, like to this day. And I know I can always rely on him to do something for me because he will do it. It's like now, as I have gotten older and I have more friends, like, they're a big support also.

When I'm feeling down and out, I just call somebody, and if I need a hug, I can go get one. You know, if I just need somebody to sit there and talk to, I'll have somebody to do that. And it's not, a lot of people can't say that they have friends like that, but, I'm not going to say that everybody I talk to is my friend. I may have maybe five real friends that I know that with out a doubt, anything that I need, I can call on them and they'll be there for me.

Like, there's a lot of people that I consider, like, okay, they're acquaintances, like they're just people I say 'Hi' and 'Bye' to. Or like, I'll say a little something, something to, but I'd know deep down in my heart that I'm not going to grow with them. Like, they're not going to be there for me. So, I just know how to push people aside and I know who's here for me and who wants me to succeed.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: So have you left, like, a lot of friends behind that, from back home, that since you've been in college, not even just since college, since you graduated from high school, that they weren't

right for you anymore? To be friends with, or...

ANINE STANLEY: Well, basically in high school, I really didn't have any friends because I just considered myself a little bit more mature than most. The only friends that I really did have, I still talk to till this day. Which is about four people out of high school. But, especially when I got pregnant, a lot of people looked at me a certain way, a lot of people turned their head against me. A lot of people said things about me. And it's like going to high school was kind of hard, after that point. Which, I didn't really care, but then I did care. It's like, you know when people say things to you, or say things about you? You say you don't care about it,...But it really does hurt and it really does affect you in certain ways. But what I try to do is keep my head up and try to make sure the negative stuff don't really get too far in to make me break down. I mean everybody has their moments. When you're pregnant, you're very emotional, so things tend to happen. But I just try to stay away from that side and keep on the positive side, all the time.

Basically, I've had to cut off a few friends who weren't in my best interest. They just wanted me, when they wanted me for them, but when I had problems, they didn't want to hear about my problems. So, it was like, you're not here for me, so why do I need you? And I basically had to cut off a few people before the new year started. But after the few I cut off, only one came back, and I know that she's true. So now, we're building on our relationship again.

KATRINA BRUMFIELD: That's it for part one of "Compelling Stories." In the next episode, Anine talks about her struggles to survive high school and her journey to college. She discusses her continual struggle to be a parent, and the tragedy of losing loved ones. Thanks for listening, I'm your host, Katrina Brumfield.