

Patrick and Gloria Lake Monologue Scripts

Patrick Lake:

Hi, I'm Patrick Lake. I've been married to my wife Gloria for many years. We have two children, John and Sarah, and four grandchildren. They don't live in the area, but they are very good about calling us several times a week. We're really proud of them and their families, but I wish we could see them more. Mostly I wish they were closer so they could give Gloria a bit of help with the chores that are getting hard for me to do now, like climbing on the roof to clean the gutters. Mostly I manage just fine with my amputation, but I've got arthritis now and it's not getting any better.

I lost my leg when I was serving in the army. I was injured from an explosive device when we were rescuing some civilians. I honestly didn't know what hit me, and then next thing you know, I woke up in the hospital. I didn't have a lot of pain or anything, but I could tell from the looks on the faces around me that something was very wrong. Then the doctors and nurses broke the news that I had lost my leg. It took a minute to register. I mean, I know on the one hand I should have been grateful to be alive, but on the other hand I thought, "How will I go on, I mean, I'm an active 22-year-old with a wife at home and a baby on the way." Life changed drastically for us from then on, and although we tried to maintain some sense of normalcy, life was just not the same.

But the one good thing was, I was going home. The rehabilitation center was close to home, and like a good soldier, I followed the regimen for physical and occupational therapy and was home to my expectant wife in no time. Once I got home, that's when the real challenges began. How could I be a good husband, father, and provider with this disability? It was true, the prosthesis was the best they had available at the time, but still.... I mean, I couldn't just get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, it took some thought, and I felt like I was always bothering Gloria for something – although, she never complained. I'll never forget, one night, I got up to use the bathroom about 2 AM. I just hopped right out of bed! Right, you guessed it...onto the floor. Totally forgot that I didn't have my leg on Thankfully, I was not hurt, but I didn't make that mistake again. It sure scared Gloria though.

So life went on; Gloria and I adjusted. I mean this was an adjustment for her as well as for me. I remember how nervous I was carrying our first little baby around, "what if my leg gave out?" Over time the fears faded, and I was even able to coach baseball and soccer for the kids. But you know, as "normal" as you try to make it, you can't get away from the fact that I'm a person with an amputation and I need to think before I jump into something. Sometimes when the kids were younger, their friends would look at me funny, like they wanted to ask me, but were afraid. Gloria and I always tried to be honest with them, and be sure they weren't afraid of it.

More recently, as I get older, my big concern is not wanting to be a burden to Gloria and the kids. I know the arthritis is not going to get any better so there's always this nagging worry in the back of my mind about it.

Gloria Lake:

Hi, I'm Gloria Lake. Patrick and I have had many happy years, and considering the stress we had early on in our marriage with his injury and learning to live with an amputation, I'd say that is something to celebrate. Our kids have always been supportive and help us whenever we need it. However, I'm concerned that as we get older that Patrick is going to require more help from me, and I'm not sure I can handle it, and I don't want to overburden our children or their families.

Patrick generally has not let too much get in his way of living a normal, active life, despite his amputation. He has virtually let nothing stop him from doing the things most people can do. But recently, I've been a little more concerned about how his disability is affecting his, well really our, life. And I know he is worried too, mainly about the burden it places on me ... but I'm not so worried about that. We have good children and neighbors and friends who will help. What I worry more about is Patrick's ability to be able to mentally and emotionally handle a change in his independence as the arthritis and other "old age" things creep up. Sometimes he just uses the walker that we have at home, instead of putting his leg on to get around the house. I worry he will fall without his leg on, and that scares me.

Patrick has always been so determined about maintaining his independence. He works hard at staying healthy. At our age, if we get sick, it's harder to get back to normal, and normal for him is a little different than normal for you or me. I know his independence means everything to him. It's what kept him motivated from the day he woke up and found out that he lost his leg. I have always felt proud and lucky about how well he recovered – both mentally and physically – and I know he did so well because he could maintain his independence and be the husband, man, and father he always wanted to be. But the future worries me...