Young daughter’s empathy eases journey for single mom

“You got this.” Three words of encouragement heard around the world. But not always true. “We think in our head that we got this, but sometimes you need help,” says Preeti Naidu. For Preeti, that help has come not only from cousins, uncles, aunts, and friends, but from an amazing 8-year-old girl.

Preeti, who works as a Microsoft delivery resource manager in Hyderabad, India, has been separated from her husband for five years. She admits it’s been a struggle at times raising their young daughter, Samiksha, on her own. “In the early days of my separation, I didn’t ask for help,” Preeti says. “I thought people would perceive me as a needy parent, or that I was playing the victim or sympathy card. I eventually realized I had to keep things real and be authentic as I started from scratch, building our lives all over again.”

As you’d expect, initially Samiksha was priority number one in Preeti’s life. “Everything revolved around her,” she says. “I was stressing out. I didn’t have an outlet for me to do something for myself.” She had always loved yoga and working out, so Preeti began carving out time to make them part of her new life. “I’ve found any form of exercise helps my mind and body.”

Working out has become part of Samiksha’s life, too. “She’s a great gymnast and enjoys working out, so we do it together. We’re kind of making it our thing. The journey I’ve been on has been amazing because it’s been with my daughter.”

“Samiksha is extremely empathetic,” Preeti says. “She understands and absorbs everything.” When Preeti had a Microsoft certification to complete, it was Samiksha who kept her going. “For five months I spent weekends studying,” she says. “When I’d get discouraged, Samiksha would push and encourage me, bringing me green tea while I studied, and sometimes making me breakfast.”
“She’s made things so much easier for us. When I tell her it’s going to be late hours with late calls, she gets it. She’ll say, I’ll do things on my own and put myself to bed. She even organized a surprise birthday party for me with my close friends because she wanted me to feel special. She’s an absolute joy to grow with.”

Not wanting memories of this relationship to vanish over time, Preeti captured its essence in a short piece she wrote, hoping that “when she’s older and I’m really old” Samiksha will read it and find inspiration from the lives they shared. You can hear what she wrote—in addition to much more of Preeti’s story—on the Powered by the People podcast.

Preeti says a journey such as hers cannot always be a struggle, missing what you lost. “Celebrate what you have. For me, I celebrate my daughter. I celebrate every single moment, every single day, every single joke and story, every walk together. I’m so grateful for everything I have.”