

# Rebekah Gregory

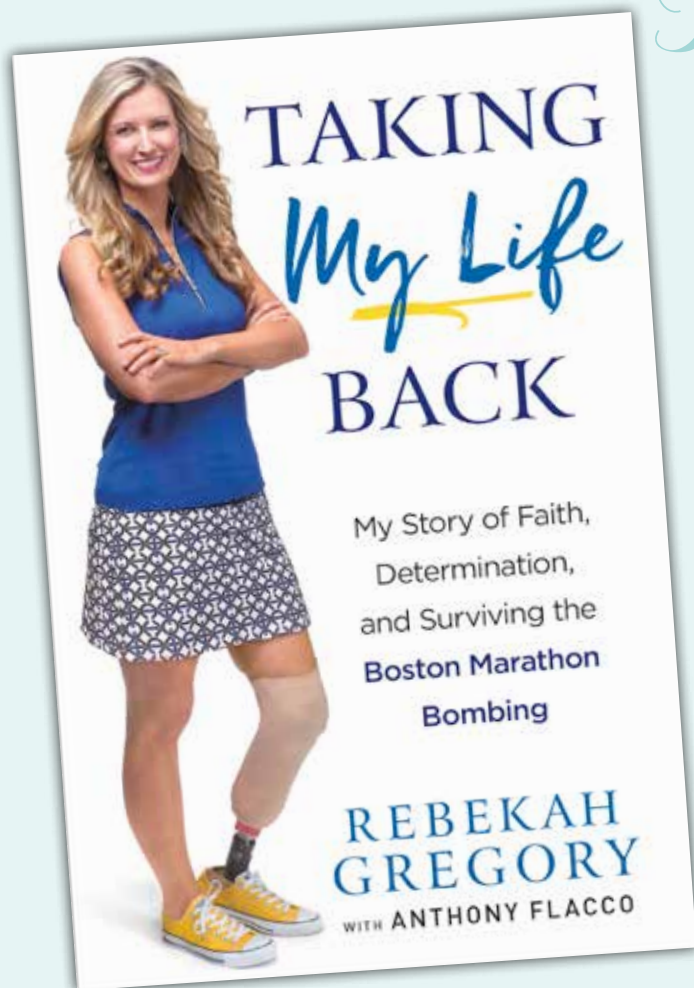
**Boston Marathon bombing survivor, motivational speaker, and Katy mom shares her story of struggle, faith, and triumph**

*Written by Kirsten Cornell | Photography courtesy of Icon Media Group*

After the Boston Marathon bombing, Rebekah Gregory became a household name. But her challenges began long before that fateful day.



Two years after the bombing, Rebekah Gregory returned to Boston and participated in a portion of the marathon on her prosthetic



I grew up in a very abusive home where picking the wrong thing to eat first on my dinner plate had the potential to throw my biological dad into a complete tirade,” Gregory shares. “Even though my father gave us up when I was a teen, the message that I would never be good enough has played a very prominent role throughout my life.”

Her resilience and determination bred from tumultuous circumstances led Gregory to pen her memoir, *Taking My Life Back*.

## Miracle in Tragedy

On April 15th, 2013 Gregory was with a group of people, watching a friend run in the marathon. Her son Noah, 5 at the time, had taken the trip with her. “At first, we stopped at the 17 marker to track our runner with an app on our phones. Then someone decided that we should get closer to the finish line so that we could actually see her cross,” says Gregory.

Noah had become increasingly bored, and Gregory decided to place him on top of her feet so that he could sit and play in the “rocks” until they were ready to leave. “That’s where Noah was when the first bomb went off only about three or so feet behind us,” she recalls. She was later told that decision is what saved his life. “My own body was a shield for my little boy, and even though I lost part of my leg and had numerous other injuries, if it meant saving him, I would do it again in a

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heartbeat,” she says. “If I have realized one thing, it is that life is precious, and I’m ashamed that it took getting blown up by a bomb for me to truly start living each day, instead of just surviving a stressful routine.”

### Finding Courage

Though she is now one of 17 amputees as a result of the bombing, Gregory says she left her old world on Boylston Street. “I will never forget the conversation I had with my mom when I could do nothing more than lie in the bed early in my recovery. She told me that God was giving me a huge platform to help others. I don’t think it will ever be an easy thing, but if I can help someone else through what I’ve been through, it’s worth it every time.”

This in part encouraged her to travel around the globe sharing her message of encouragement and survival with others as well as becoming the author of her own story. “Taking my life back is what I feel like I am choosing to do every single day,” says Gregory. “Even on the hardest days I decide to find their beauty and let my trials make me stronger.”

While the bombing was certainly her most publicized brush with death, it was not her first and Gregory has many other tales to share. “If I can help someone else by sharing my rawest moments, it gives my journey a little more purpose,” she adds.

Gregory’s message to other survivors is that there is a reason they are still here. She encourages them to use whatever obstacles they have faced and live the most meaningful life they can. “We already know it’s short, so the last thing we want to do is waste it.”

### Live Each Day

The Katy community has been immensely supportive of Gregory throughout her recovery and continued journey. “It seems everywhere we go someone is coming up to me saying they are still rooting me on. That’s a wonderful feeling and I’m blessed to be a part of such a great place.”

Gregory has since married and the family welcomed a baby girl last year, Ryleigh. “I have the most amazing support system who I owe everything to,” she adds. “My husband and two beautiful children keep me going, and because of them, giving up will never be an option.”

Today Gregory embraces her “new normal,” meaning that no matter how many adaptations she has to make in her new life, she continues to remember how blessed she really is. “This may not be the world I once knew, and I would give anything for one more day of the old one, but I am happy enough to accept the new one for what it is and make the most out of it. Life blows up in our faces. Our new normal is what we choose to do after.” **KM**



Gregory with her husband Chris Varney and their children, Noah and Ryleigh

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