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**Word count:** 851

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## **A Near Death Experience**

My Cell Phone's Journey to the Afterlife...and Back

“Hang up and Drive,” warned the bumper sticker on the car in front of me. “Duh,” I thought to myself - everyone knows that driving and using a cell phone at the same time is a bad idea. It can cause you to be distracted, lose your focus, and in general, become a much less effective conversationalist.

Oh, there’s that other stuff, too – it could cause you to have an accident, wreck your car, break every bone in your body, blah, blah, blah.

But if you think that’s the worst that can happen, I have bad news. This is shocking - and you may want to sit down before you read further. Just be careful WHERE you sit down, because it could happen to you. Like me, you could drop your cell phone...in the toilet.

Now, I didn’t drop my cell phone in my OWN toilet. Oh, no – that would be gross – but it would be the average, run-of-the mill type gross, the kind you see on “Fear Factor.” It had to be a PUBLIC toilet, which is the extreme type of gross, the kind you see on the “Super Bowl Half-Time Show.”

I was picking up my daughter, Kelly, from school, and after a bottle of Aquafina, needed a pit stop. My phone was securely attached to my belt. Or so I thought. I locked myself in the stall, sat down and proceeded to...well, actually, I think I’ll skip this part.

Anyway, once I was finished, I turned around...and froze, my foot sticking up in mid-air. My foot HAD been headed toward the handle to flush, but the sight of a foreign object resting at the bottom of the toilet stopped me cold. The object was bubbling like a dying fish, gasping for air. “What the heck?” I’d checked the toilet before using it – always a good idea at an elementary school – and knew the coast had been clear. I was momentarily puzzled at this object’s mysterious appearance.

Wait a minute...this was no foreign object – it was my CELL PHONE!

Now, a person never REALLY knows how they will act in an emergency until it happens. Some people become paralyzed with fear. But others exhibit courage and SUPER HUMAN strength, lifting up cars and running into burning buildings.

That day I found out - I AM ONE OF THOSE SUPER HUMANS. In a split second I'd shoved my sweatshirt up my arm and plunged my hand into the cold water (well, okay, it wasn't actually just WATER) to the rescue.

Before I go on, I need to fill you in on something. I didn't realize it at the time, but I wasn't alone. There was a girl – a young, impressionable, third grade-ish girl -- in the bathroom with me when this happened. Imagine this from her perspective:

As my hand hit the water, I shrieked, "OH NOOO! Ewww...Yuck! How...GROSS! Yuck, yuck, yuck...GROSS! EWWWW!" Then I opened the door of the stall, the dripping cell phone held out in front of me as far as possible.

That's when I saw her, standing there with a wide-eyed look of horror. "Oh, um...hi..." I stammered. "Gee, I didn't know anyone was in here." I realized what she must have been thinking - and wanted to reassure her that my outburst hadn't been referring to some bodily function that had just occurred. "It's just that I dropped my cell phone in the toilet! Ha Ha!" This didn't seem to help, and she quickly escaped into the hallway.

I shook what "water" I could out of my phone, as the lights on its screen gently flickered and went out, as if to bid me goodbye after its burial at sea. When I picked Kelly up, I told her what had happened. She informed me that IF my cell phone ever started working, she was NEVER going to touch it again. That's right, she would no longer borrow my phone to play games, to change my ring tones, to call friends....

Hmmm - I thought to myself...there could be a silver lining to all this!

When I got home, I scoured the house for every product I could find that said "antibacterial," and wiped my cell phone down thoroughly, while at the same time trying not to touch it. As visions of the replacement cost danced in my head, I performed minor surgery. I used pliers to pry it open a little, and jammed a few hair clips in to keep it from closing. Then I set up a fan to blow on it all night .

In the morning, I raced out to check on "the patient," fearing the worst. Imagine my thrill when I saw the screen light on, cheerfully informing me, "You Have One New Voicemail!"

"It's working, it's WORKING!!!" I cried, and ran in to show Kelly.

Since this happened, I've heard many accounts of other people's phones being submerged by accident, and never, EVER working again.

All I can say is, it must have been something in the water.