

As Hamilton recalls, “suddenly there was a flash of gray.” She felt two hard tugs on her arm, and then they were gone—her left arm and the 15-foot tiger shark that had attacked her. Her surfboard floated nearby with a huge bite taken out of it. The water around her turned red. She yelled to her friends and quickly began swimming back to shore with her right arm. One of Hamilton’s friends’ fathers made a tourniquet from a surf leash to stop the bleeding. An ambulance rushed Hamilton to the closest hospital, which was an hour’s drive away. She was in and out of consciousness for the whole ride.

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COINCIDENCE? At the hospital, doctors moved quickly to **assess** Hamilton’s condition. Ninety percent of her left arm had been severed from below her shoulder, she had lost about 70 percent of her blood, and she needed immediate surgery. There was one operating room open. A man was scheduled to have surgery on his knee there. In what may seem an eerie coincidence, that man was Hamilton’s father. His daughter was quickly wheeled into the operating room in his place.

For Hamilton’s family, what happened that day was not a coincidence at all. Their strength and positive attitude gave them a different **perspective**. The family believed that she had survived the attack and reached medical care in time for a reason. They had the conviction that Hamilton had more to do with her life. This belief sustained them as they waited through her surgery.

Hamilton has always been a very **determined** and committed person. Having survived the shark attack, her **determination** grew even stronger. It is no wonder that only a few days after she lost her arm, Hamilton was already planning to get back out on her surfboard. Nobody had to talk her into it. She knew she could do it.

AN INSPIRATION Three weeks after the shark attack, Bethany Hamilton was back up on a surfboard in the Pacific Ocean. She had a special board, fitted with a strap near the top so she could get to a standing position on the board. In some ways, Hamilton had to relearn how to surf. Much of the sport depends on balance. With the loss of her arm, she had to find her balance all over again.