

## An Invitation

*You have Lupus.  
Immune system attacking self.  
No cure.  
Unknown cause.  
Unpredictable course.  
Few treatments: Plaquenil, prednisone...  
Allergy: Plaquenil.  
Potentially life-threatening.  
Lifelong chronic disease.*

Those words pounded through my heart and reverberated in the silence of my soul like demons chasing their target for a midnight haunting. I felt out of control, betrayed by my own body, abandoned by an unknown God.

So many of my dreams flew out of the window the night I discovered my allergy to Plaquenil. I wanted a life helping others heal. I had chosen Physical Therapy over Medicine to be more involved in the process of healing than being a mere checkpoint. I wanted a life of love with my partner & my wife and our two-and-three-quarters children, one of the two human babies I had hoped to be from my womb. I wanted a life of peace, inner peace, of worship and wonder, a life where legacies are made in the small moments of loving-kindness. Now, lying in bed, my heart pounding, my skin an electric wire mesh, and sleep my farthest friend, I wondered if my body would hold up to the basic demands of life like walking and talking, getting out of bed, or simply being outside playing in the sun.

It is a blessing, only in retrospect, to face mortality at a young age. When I was in the hospital and my only concerns were to get up from the sweat-soaked bed to go to the bathroom, to return to the bed, to wake up and force myself to eat even though my mouth was raw from the sores on my inner cheeks and gums, I began to understand something fundamental to life. I understood that I could die—that I could die tomorrow. Buddhist philosophy always mentions this, but I was tasting its bitter truth with my failing body and fighting spirit.

So, each and every moment I was awake, I attuned myself to life, to the living process, and I was thankful—soulfully grateful—for each and every visitor who sat by my bedside. They all lent me a piece of the living legacy, and I took it in as if their love was the one medicine no doctor ever thought of to prescribe per IV drip into my hungry veins.

Coming out of the hospital, I was weak but felt joyful and at peace with the world. For the first time, I could see things clearly, accept things as they are, and articulate what I see without judgments, fear or prejudice. It was like being unplugged from the Matrix and I no longer needed to keep up with the pretenses. Truth mattered. Love mattered. Now mattered. That was all.

I spent the next month healing in Colorado, and I can only describe the experience as being a Harry Potter adventure, for I learned to pay attention to the world around me, both the physical and spiritual worlds. For my ailing body, I accepted the healing powers of herbs, flowers, and trees. I learned to how to awaken the healing powers of mind and spirit. I made more time in my daily life for simple things, like prayer and meditation and slow meals eaten with mindfulness. I slowed down and simplified all aspects of my life. I made vows to live life in love and express love with authenticity. I dedicated my life to healing myself and healing others. Somewhere in the whispers of the wind on the mountaintop, I found myself sitting in peace with my soul. The simple joy of peace was like touching fingertips with God.

Wellness is a state of mind, measurable only in terms of inner peace. One may own the entire world yet have no title to one's own soul; or one may have little and have all that one might ever need. It is like looking at the half-empty glass and feeling something is always missing, or seeing the glass half-full and being grateful something always remains. Better yet: when the glass is empty, one would see the glass has capacity to hold things, more than just water, but sand, seashells, pebbles—even flowers, if one has the courage to find water to fill the glass again.

Perhaps there is no cure for lupus, but there is healing. In hindsight, a cure would have been too limited—merely a few negative results on some laboratory tests. Healing is much more complete because it is more fundamental, wholesome, and lasting.

I invite you to journey with me on this path of natural healing. I hope you will see your own *Markings* from these pages, and they will lead you to discover your own path out of whatever ails you.

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