

Miracle on 5th floor south

We forget the automatic things our bodies do. For instance, It seems so simple to be able to swallow or to be able to move the tongue and lips to talk. We just expect them to always work. But it sometimes doesn't work that way... Sometimes things fail... Sometimes our muscles and nerves refuse to answer their orders. Sometimes we find ourselves unable to function... Ready to give up ... Ready to quit trying.... Ready to move on to God's arms.

I visited the LAMC ER with what seemed to be a severe asthma attack... Fighting for breath ... But oxygen concentration good and lungs were clear.. Few days later again to the ER with the breathing issues coupled with swallowing difficulty. Head and neck muscles were very weak.. Couldn't hold up head. admitted to the hospital.... Lips swollen, unable to swallow saliva... Speech was very slurred ... Initial diagnosis was that of anaphylactic reaction to an antibiotic prescription. Hospital Dr. tried many things including other antibiotics. Prodded and tested ... did MRI searching for stroke (negative) \_ and on and on for a week until DR came to me saying that he had no other tricks in his quiver... Did not know what else to try. My PCP and the head physician in that practice were concerned enough to order other blood tests and an upper GI procedure thinking it might be a problem with my throat or????

Gail and Cindy had realized that my depression was serious and had a wonderful counselor visit with me ... We talked about fear of death, about the fact that people were needing me. And was I really ready to quit. Did not tell me to hang on but reminded me that depression would lift, that one always came out the other side stronger.

When Gail came to hospital to visit she always wore a bright smile and dressed nicely and wore jewelry and looked beautiful. She had realized that I needed cheering and was trying to do that ... But behind that facade was a lady doing all she could to keep me going. and getting more and more bone tired. And really frightened that the end was right around the corner.

Was then discharged to Sombrillo Rehab facility because there was a resident speech therapy person on staff ... Hoping that the therapist could help me strengthen my very weak muscles with training and exercise. ... Help me learn to swallow and speak again.

1st miracle: Brenda and Nancy who had been following the affair and worried about Cindy and Gail decided to ride the train from Kansas. I was at a very low point and had been planning my own funeral when they walked in. Depression was overwhelming... was so tired no longer could fight. By this time I had been without food for more than a week and was severely dehydrated. ... Wanted to quit and just let go. But when they arrived it helped me see that I needed to think of Gail and my beautiful daughters and family and not be selfish and give up.

Also that night my Emmaus group from Alcalde walked in and lifted me more and prayed for me with all of us holding hands.. , I had no physical resources left and the only thing that kept me going was the presence of my family and dear friends from Alcalde and prayers. It was beautiful but at the time I was so far down that I'm not sure I fully realized that a miracle was happening. But as I write this remembering that eve I can see that God brought all of these elements together that night. to save and preserve the life of his servant.

Then after a few sessions at Sombrillo in speech therapy we realized this was not working... There was something else going on that a standard stroke retraining would not correct. ... Something yet to be identified Was discharged to St Vincent ER for a series of swallow tests . St Vincent ER Dr. Rosen saw me. Did an end of the bed exam and said all of your DR's have been barking up the wrong tree ... That he had a test to prove his conclusion correct and was it ok to administer the IV fluid needed. Did the test. Speech capability returned almost instantly. Rosen did several physical neurological test to further confirm his diagnosis. Swallow returned, eyes opened fully, BUT the test IV was temporary.. and he admitted me to UNM hospital neurological floor (5 south) We drove to Albq early eve and was directly put in a bed.

#### 2 nd miracle

Next morning met with MG (Myasthenia Gravis) expert Dr Lesser, (and a bevy of students ) who just happened to be on duty over the weekend.. He ordered a 5 day course treatment program using gamma globulin coupled with some oral drugs that strengthen the muscle nerve interface along with prednisone to reduce inflammation. Over the course of that day I began to swallow my saliva, to retrieve my speech capability, My droopy eyes began to lift, my floppy head/neck retrieved its muscle strength and I could again hold up my head. I could see my life returning almost minute by minute . Also a stomach tube was inserted so I could get some nourishment, liquid and medication That day was like like riding through a rainbow of glorious colors as each lost physical attribute returned . And the depression lifted and I celebrated and thanked God. Wow! What an experience!!! There were many tears both mine and family that day.. Some of us just lost all control and let the healing power of tears flow over us.. A miraculous day.

But life has setbacks sometimes and this story is no different. Sometimes MG victims have a growth on their thymus. A chest CT scan was ordered and the results were totally unexpected .. Pulmonary embolism showed up. That was a big downer. Had just experienced the miracle of returning to life only to receive another potentially fatal diagnosis. But somehow that diagnosis was not so devastating as I knew God was there rescuing me from the MG and would take care of the embolism.

I have tried to understand suicide and depression and been unable to really know how anyone could ever feel like that suicide was the only solution. I remember a wonderful beautiful gifted young man, a close neighbor who was like a grandson to me who devastated his family and church with his suicide.. I totally understand now the depth of despair and tiredness, and hopelessness and blackness that Dominick felt when he

solved his problem with a bullet. I believe Dominick was totally clear in his thinking just as I think I was when things were so black. I now understand and have experienced now a loving friend, family, pastor, counselor, physician, nurse, church can intervene with prayer and a visit. I pray that I never again run from a situation in which a suicide is a possibility because it might be my prayer or my visit that would be part of his miracle and help provide him a path back to life. I did not have the opportunity to help Dominick.

Sometimes we look at hospitals as houses where we go to die... I'm suggesting that the UNM Hospital is a temple of God's hope. A place staffed by loving dedicated hard working angels, a place where we can go for healing so as to again experience life in its glorious fullness.

When we walked into our house after returning from five days in the UNM hospital in ALBQ I was unprepared for the emotions that surfaced. I walked from room to room looking at the beautiful familiar things in each room. Things I had thought I would never see again... Children toys, special family photos ... Things that make our house our home ... most with little financial value but with precious memories ... tears and sobs ...in appreciation of the miracle that I received this last week. in appreciation of the ability and opportunity to return home.

Thanks be to God for life and love, for miracles, for family, for prayers, for friends, for Emmaus. For church ...!

Amen