



Inflamed in the Membrane

Be Sober. Be Fit. Be Brave.
Don't Quit.

Krys Kwiecien

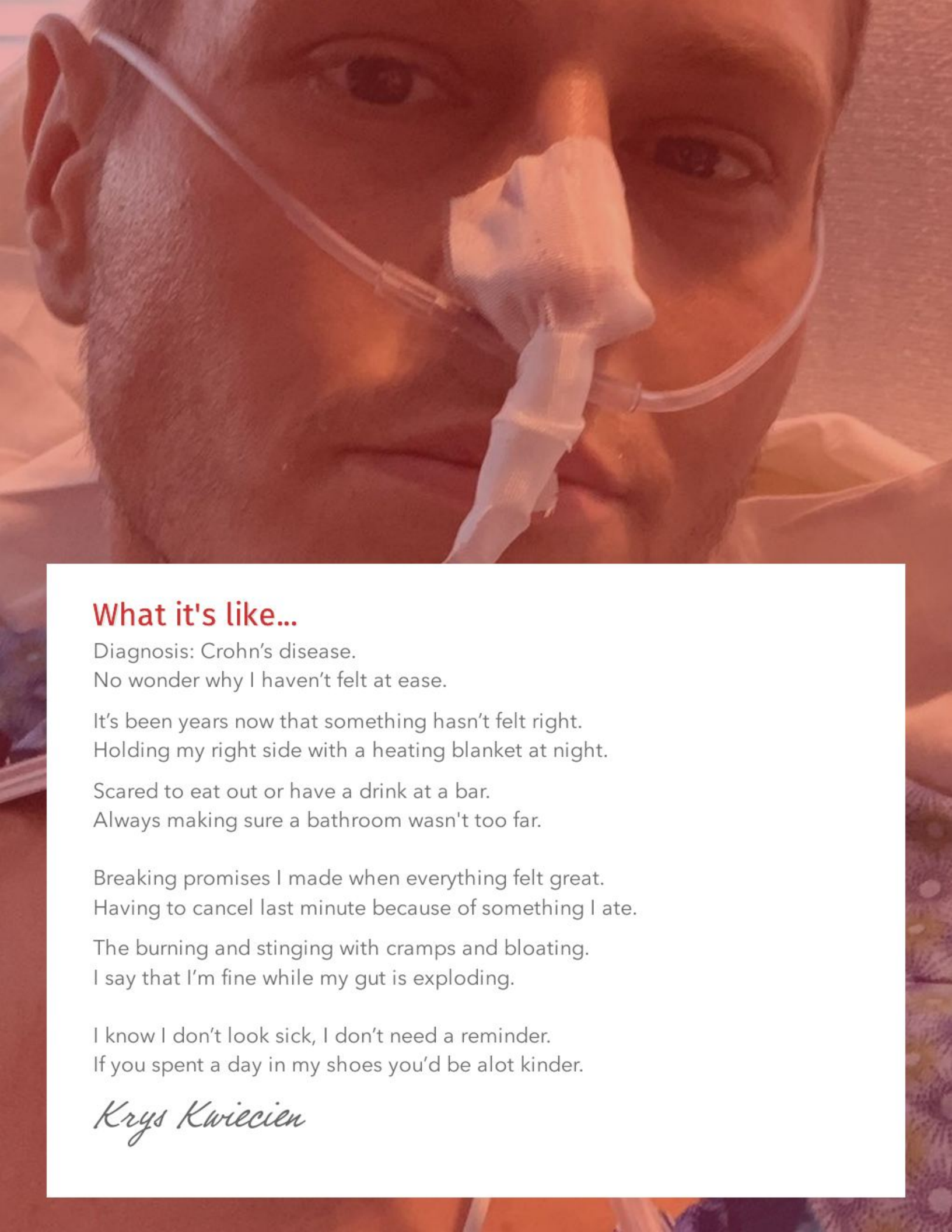


INFLAMED IN THE MEMBRANE



My personal struggle with
Crohn's disease, addiction,
and my 3 part journey to remission

by: Krys Kwiecien



What it's like...

Diagnosis: Crohn's disease.

No wonder why I haven't felt at ease.

It's been years now that something hasn't felt right.
Holding my right side with a heating blanket at night.

Scared to eat out or have a drink at a bar.
Always making sure a bathroom wasn't too far.

Breaking promises I made when everything felt great.
Having to cancel last minute because of something I ate.

The burning and stinging with cramps and bloating.
I say that I'm fine while my gut is exploding.

I know I don't look sick, I don't need a reminder.
If you spent a day in my shoes you'd be a lot kinder.

Krys Kwiecien

A large, stylized graphic of a flame in shades of red, serving as the background for the text.

My Struggle

This section of my story focuses on what my life was like leading up to my first flare, diagnosis, depression and all the poor choices I made that landed me on the operating table moments from death.

It was November 2019 and I knew that I didn't feel good. I haven't exercised in years and the only concern I had was making money. I was working for an audio video integration company as a contractor, flying around the United States with a backpack and a Pelican case of tools. I would fly for two or three weeks at a time staying in hotels, eating fast food, drinking energy drinks, and abusing Adderall. I was a hot stressed out mess and I didn't plan to change since the tickets were first class and I was making \$85,000 a year after taxes. I'd just work until I collapsed and then spend a week at home playing video games, ordering Door Dash, drinking Moscow Mules and smoking weed.

I thought I was living the dream, but all the self medicating just made me think everything was okay. It wasn't. I had diarrhea every bowel movement and didn't go to the doctor. I would just take more Adderall, fast for the day, and crack another Red Bull because nobody has time for that. I feel like the universe was screaming at me to stop. Everything started going wrong. Work was becoming more difficult and even my travel was complicated. I was finally at my wits end, frustrated. So, I turned to my one big motivational comfort.

The Joe Rogan Experience.

It was already halfway through the month so joining him in the sober October challenge wasn't possible. I was drinking while watching it. But there was something else that caught my attention and convinced me that this was my time to shine. "The Game Changers" documentary had just come out and James Wilks was on the JRE. My ears perked up as I listened carefully to the back-and-forth debate on the miraculous effects of a raw food vegan diet. Athletes, stars, and celebrities were turning superhuman as a result. I turned off the podcast (bad idea) and watched the documentary, finished my drink and got to work. I was so pumped to gain my life back and clean up my act. The switch had flipped for me. It was exactly what I needed. Or so I thought.

I did some research and started shopping around. I realized quick that a lot of this so called "healthy" vegan food was a trap, no less processed than the freezer crap. It was just double the price and had cute names. So, I really focused on the whole food approach. I bought fresh veggies and fruits every day. I ate rice and beans and even started to go for long walks with my dog, Oliver, to try and burn some fat (he loved that part). I was eating about 65 grams of fiber per day and around 2100 calories. I kept telling myself I felt better, and I would just watch parts of the documentary for support. I told everyone I was doing this and even tried to convince them to watch it.

After a week at home, I had to travel again for work. That brought a whole new layer of complexity. I still managed to find the best food sources I could and find salad bars or hot food options that didn't appear too processed. I loved eating and I didn't miss meat one bit. I guess when you've been eating meat for as long as I have (back in my body building days) it's nice to switch it up. My diarrhea went away completely but it was replaced with the opposite.

I thought that's what fiber was supposed to do! I was drinking only water at this point. No energy drinks. No alcohol. Just the occasional black coffee (if it was free).

The day before I had to fly home, I remember straining so hard on the toilet that I heard something pop inside me. I didn't feel a lump or anything on my abdomen, but my entire right side was tender to the touch. I jumped on google to check my symptoms. I was convinced I had mild appendicitis. I took it easy and laid down and took some Ibuprofen. The next morning, the bowel movement passed, and I headed back to the airport to fly home. My side was still sore and tender, but I took some Adderall kept truckin'.

The next few days were complicated. I was in so much pain that I couldn't even move. I was curled up with a heating blanket taking 800mg of Ibuprofen and stubbornly not going to the hospital. After two days of night sweats, my fiancée Samantha basically dragged me to the emergency room. When I arrived, I immediately got a CT scan for an apparent appendicitis. I was given some morphine, antibiotics, and told to rest.

The pain subsided and eventually we got the results.

"I have good news. Your appendix is fine." said the doctor suggesting this was the good news.

"But we think that you have Crohn's disease"

Whaddya mean think? How can we know for sure?

It was 11/22/2019 I will never forget that day.

Colonoscopy biopsy confirmed it. Crohn's Disease.

disease

itis

SYMPTOMS TREATMENT

Phone: (303)661

vice Phone: 631080 Hours: 7:00am - 7:30p

11/22/19

RN: Amy

LPN: Tiffany

Physician:

Charge Date: / / Time: : a

Phone:

ational Therapy

Speech & Respiratory The

ation and

Everything seemed backwards.

Isn't this raw-food vegan diet the protocol that sick people start to fix conditions like Crohn's? Why didn't I go superhuman like the athletes and actors on this vegan diet? My gastro saw my frustration and said the strangest thing I've ever heard a doctor say. "Sometimes, it doesn't matter what you eat. Crohn's is genetic."

Depression set in. I felt alone and angry. They sent me home with a prescription for Budesonide and a ridiculous list of foods that I should avoid.

Over \$50,000 in debt and I really needed a drink. At this point I ditched the diet. It was a "game changer". I just wanted to be numb, so I started drinking again. Vodka, Crystal Light, and 90 mg Adderall all at once, trying to pretend everything would be okay playing video games until 2 AM.

This was a dark place in my life and the only reason I survived was because of my nephews. Samantha and I took custody of the boys with the intention to reconnect them to their mother here in Colorado. They were my saving grace and forced me to set a better example.

I had to shape up and get my shit together. I was their Uncle Krys, the genius tech-wizard who could kickflip with his eyes closed. Not this sick depressed bag of donuts. But unfortunately, I did a lot of damage before they moved in.

At the end of February, I had a flare. It started with mouth ulcers and joint pain, then bloating, cramping, and abdominal pain. I was living the November nightmare again, still as stubborn as before.

I couldn't afford another ER visit and I was trying to pray the pain away. My fever had reached 104.5 so it was time to go. I made it there just in time according to the doctor who came back with results from my CT scan.

"You have sepsis and several large abscesses in your abdomen. We have to prep for surgery."

I remember not even caring what happened next. Just arriving at the hospital felt like I was in good hands. They pumped me full of Morphine and the rest is a big blur. The surgery was a success. There were 4 abscesses that were drained, abdominal cavity was cleaned, and my healthy appendix was removed for some reason. I remember being upset and confused about that.

The recovery in the ICU was brutal. I had a tube in my nose that ran to my stomach. I was very thirsty and was not allowed any water. Not even ice until started to panic and screamed at the nurse. I felt so empty. Welcome to Hell.

My blood showed signs of infection my ankles were starting to swell as edema set in. I was sent away for another CT scan. There was a large softball size abscess that formed right where my appendix used to be, and they needed to operate again. It was laparoscopic, but I was still put under. They installed a JP drain and I woke up in a different hospital.



A large, stylized graphic of a flame in shades of red, serving as the background for the text.

After Surgery

What life was like post operation, the change I was forced to make to finally catch a break.

They prescribed me 12 different medications, including a very high dose Prednisone which really messed with my head. My entire body was covered with acne, and I had an IV picc line installed in my arm for daily antibiotics. This type of care was not new though, my mom was very sick when I was younger, so I learned basic nursing skills when I was just 14. She has Multiple Sclerosis and is fighting to this day. That story I will save for another book.



The abscess turned into a fistula. I had to carry this drain installed in my abdomen for 6 months. I wasn't drinking anymore but that was because I couldn't. I still used my vape pen. It took about 4 months of doctor visits for me to start questioning why I wasn't healing. I did some research and stopped vaping since evidence showed that it slowed down your healing process. Then I discovered BPC-157.



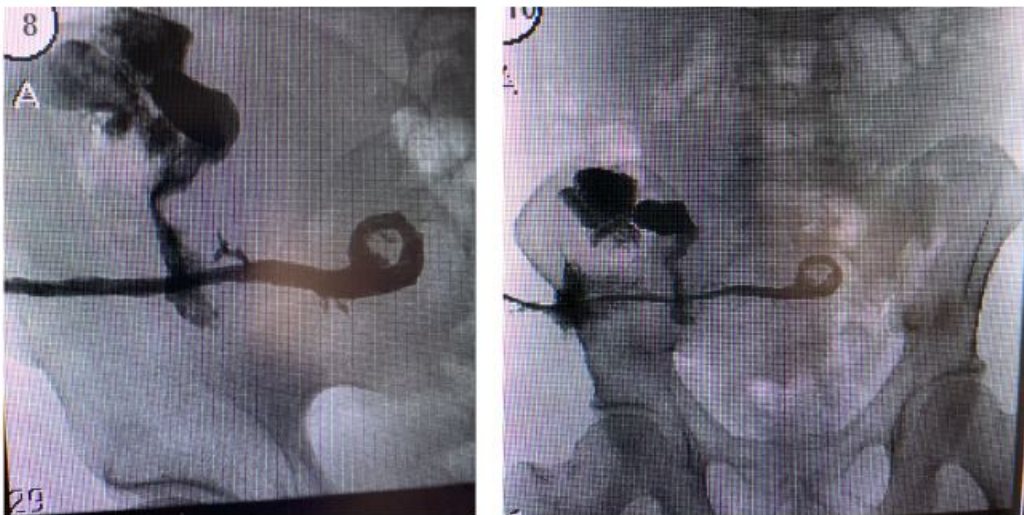
According to scientific study that has been conducted on animal test subjects, BPC 157 functions as a partial sequence of body protection compound (BPC) that can be found and isolated within gastric juices. Its primary operative is to be a regulating factor in the proper functionality of the digestive tract through its anti-ulcer peptidergic properties.

BPC stands for "body protection compound" and is found in gastric juices. Doctors in other countries prescribe it but it is unregulated in the United States. You could buy it online listed as "Not for Human Consumption".

Reading some forums, I started to understand what was going on. The people asking about dosages didn't really have a 210 lb. lab rat with Crohn's, they were using it themselves. The results felt like they were too good to be true, but I was really desperate for alternative treatment, and this wasn't my first time hearing of these "research chemicals". Again, I was desperate.

I ordered the peptide along with the Bacteriostatic water needed to mix it and some insulin syringes. The bottle was 5mg total and I was supposed to take 500 mcg every morning and evening, injecting it subcutaneously (under the skin). I did the math and started treatment.

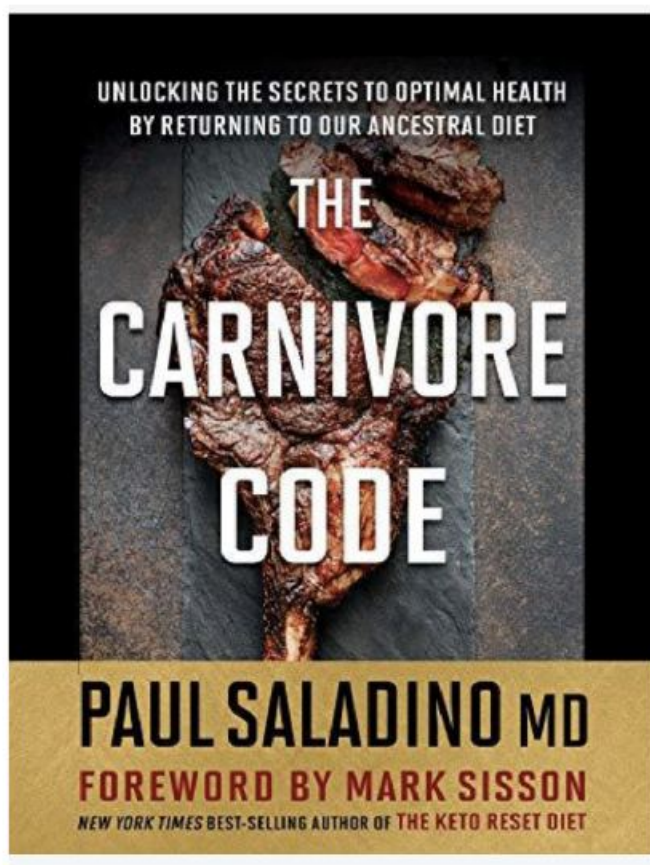
There were about 14 days until my next CT scan with contrast and I planned to do this protocol up until then. I wanted to see if it would change anything since the results were the same for the last 4 months.



Disclosure: I can't recommend this and I did not tell my doctors what I was doing or what was going on. I got lucky that nothing seriously bad happened. Desperate times called for desperate measures, and I think the Prednisone made me a little bit crazy. This was dangerous!

Krys Kwiecien, Not a doctor

As I laid on the table while the nurse prepped the scan, I had a little conversation with God. I prayed for strength and forgiveness for being so stubborn. Well, in reality, I was forced to stop these things. I couldn't drink or I would get sick. I stopped vaping because I wasn't healing. I also wasn't working so I even stopped taking the Adderall. I was at a standstill with my progress and found this promising peptide along with a new 'Nose-to-tail carnivore' diet by Paul Saladino (Thanks Joe Rogan). I was ready to heal.



"Nurse, get another saline, this one won't push in" the doctor said as he was prepping the contrast. You see, for the last 5 months they were able to inject 30 ml of fluid into the cavity through the drain. Today they couldn't push more than 10. My abscess had shrunk down to a third of its size. I started to cry from what looked like happiness, relief, and joy.

My hope was restored, and my faith was strong. I was sent home with my last bag of flushes and Tegaderm. I got 3 more bottles of BPC-157 and 2 weeks later they were finally removing my tube. I was vibrating at frequency that I didn't know existed. I was sober, happy, and asked Samantha to marry me.



I wasn't working for most of 2020, and I had maxed out all my credit cards. I was sober for that October, but it wasn't even an issue. No drinking, No drugs, No alcohol. I started my Entyvio infusions now that the tube was out.

This was given to me to help achieve and stay in remission. Nurse Lynn would come to my house every 8 weeks to give me an IV infusion. It felt nice, and I always felt hydrated after. I was told I would be on this for the rest of my life so maybe part of me learned to like it or at least see a silver lining.

The medication worked great and the diet was amazing. I even had 6 pack abs going into 2021. I had really thought that Crohn's was a thing of the past. I started to come up with a plan to get rid of my debt and found UpSolve, did some research and actually filed by myself.

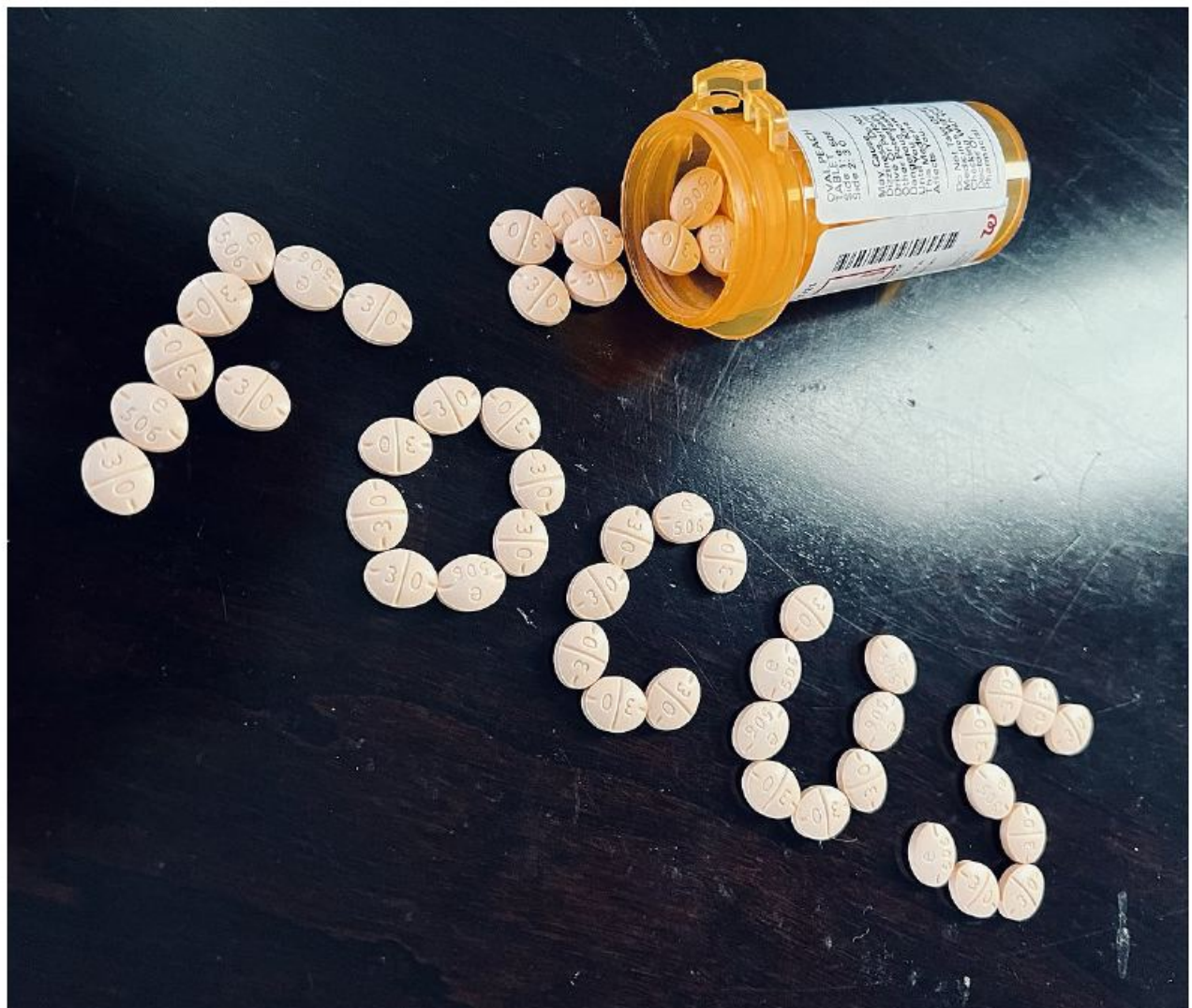


I was looking for a new job and with 6 years of audio-visual experience I went back to AVI, this time in their Colorado office. I made a promise myself not to start using Adderall again since I knew that in the past I couldn't control myself, but sure enough, I went back to the doctor, got the bottle, and gave it to Samantha to give me 1/day. What could possibly go wrong?

This deal didn't last very long. Eventually I found myself in a vicious cycle of taking Adderall and drinking energy drinks. I was very aware of what was happening, and I realized something important. This job, the problems that I have to solve, and the whole environment was a trigger for my bad habits. The strength that was required to resist these cravings wasn't something I possessed. Something had to change.

I was very lucky to find another job. It was way closer to home and had nothing to do with AV. It was like a fresh start working at EVS. I was going to be the Support Team Leader and have a new opportunity to learn about software support and help people with problems, which is my passion.

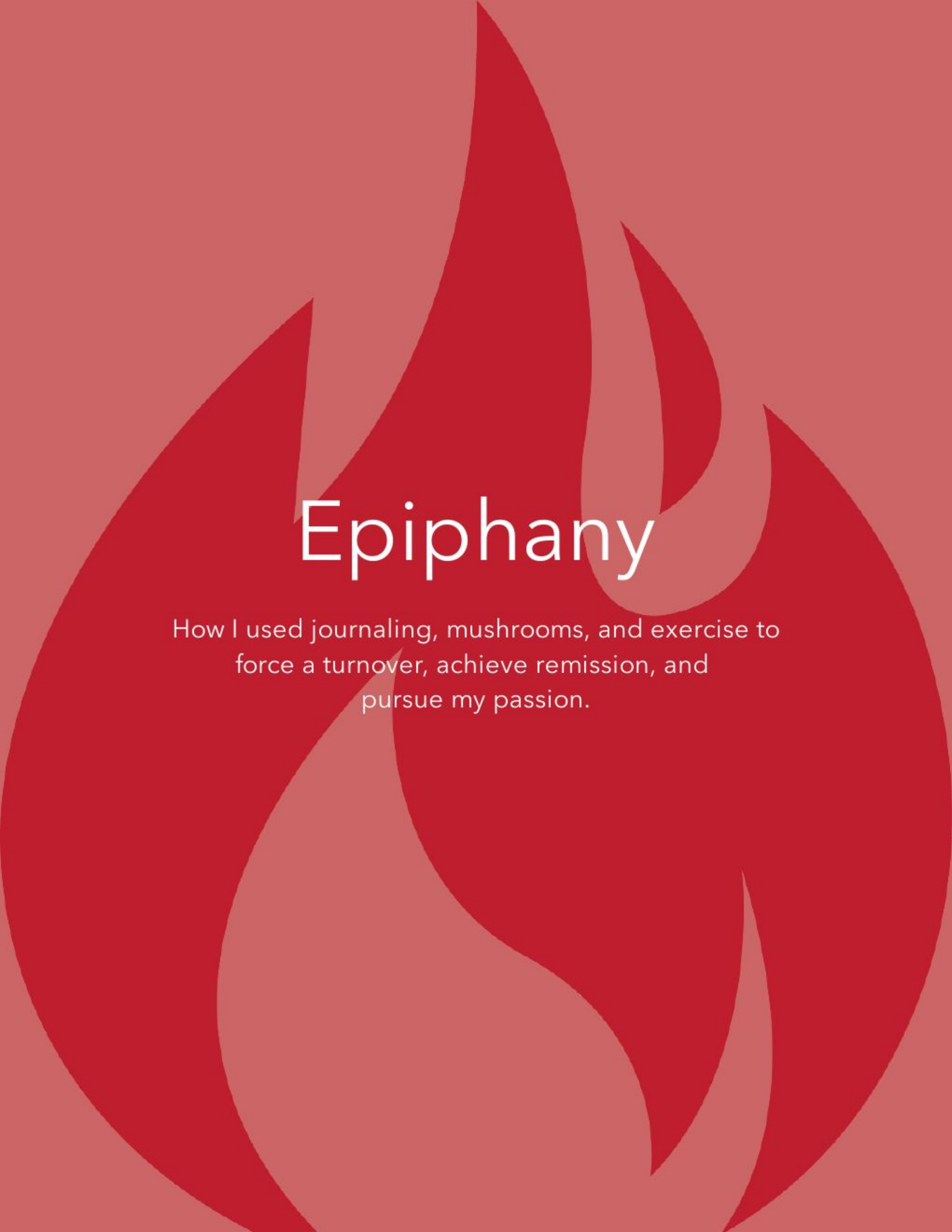
Suddenly, I stopped the Adderall and caffeine. I flipped the switch again and said a little prayer because those always seemed to help. This time I wasn't going to put myself in such a weird position. I wanted to succeed.



My last Entyvio infusion was in May, right before my birthday. By that time, I had started taking Adderall again. Yea, I know. I helped hire on a guy who reminded me of myself, and I thought I would enjoy working with him. He was a great fit for the job and as it turns out, we also shared the same "attention problems" and had "problems focusing" on our work. I was triggered.

My good habits were falling apart. I flew to Chicago for my birthday to see my mom at the nursing home and bring her an iPhone so we could Facetime instead of just calls. She felt like something was wrong, and she was right. I forgot the phone in the luggage which was with Samantha at the hotel. Really the whole reason I came to Chicago was to do this. I really messed up and instead of trying to make it right, I got angry and felt like a failure.

The flight home was miserable. I was dizzy and felt unusually tired and even fell asleep on the plane. I was having a flare. I couldn't believe it, but I wasn't surprised. I basically pissed away my remission and broke a promise that meant everything to me just to try to excel in a toxic work culture. I felt so much shame and guilt. I continued to work for another month and popped Prednisone like candy. My diet slipped and I started making myself throw up. By the end of July I was in the ER with an intestinal blockage and admitted.

The background of the entire image is a stylized, abstract flame or fire shape. It is composed of several overlapping, teardrop-like shapes in various shades of red, ranging from a deep, dark red to a lighter, almost pinkish-red. The shapes are arranged to create a sense of movement and heat, with the largest, darkest shape at the bottom and smaller, lighter shapes reaching upwards. The overall effect is a vibrant, energetic, and somewhat ethereal representation of fire.

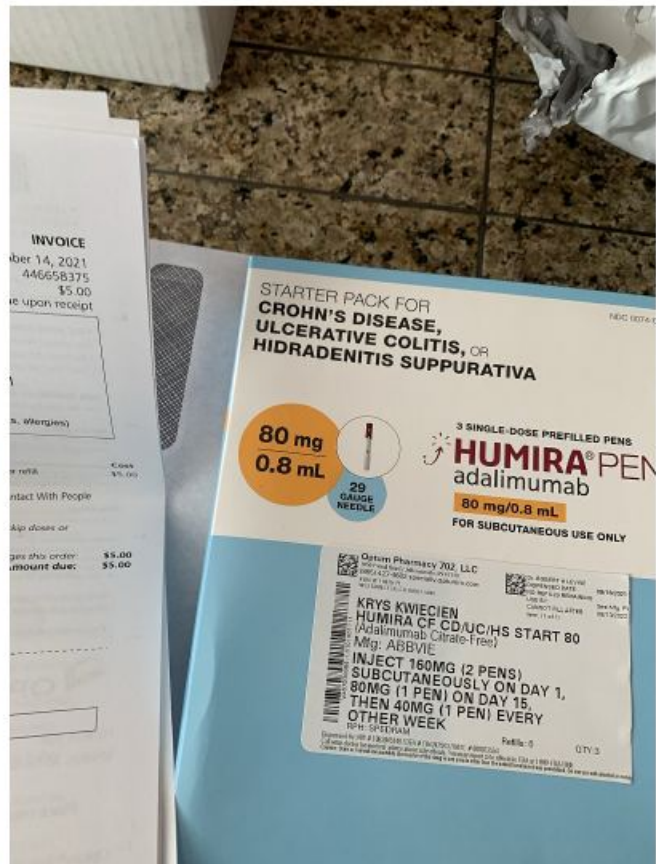
Epiphany

How I used journaling, mushrooms, and exercise to
force a turnover, achieve remission, and
pursue my passion.

I was laying in the Hospital bed after a night of steroids and waiting for my next morphine dose. The Olympics were on TV and as the nurse came in for my next fix, the Chaplain walked in at the same time. I welcomed him in and told the nurse that I didn't need it. I know a sign when I see one.

I talked about my situation, my last flare up, and he had some simple advice. I need to set up some boundaries and take care of myself before I can care for others. Very obvious stuff, but hard to practice. His words resonated hard.

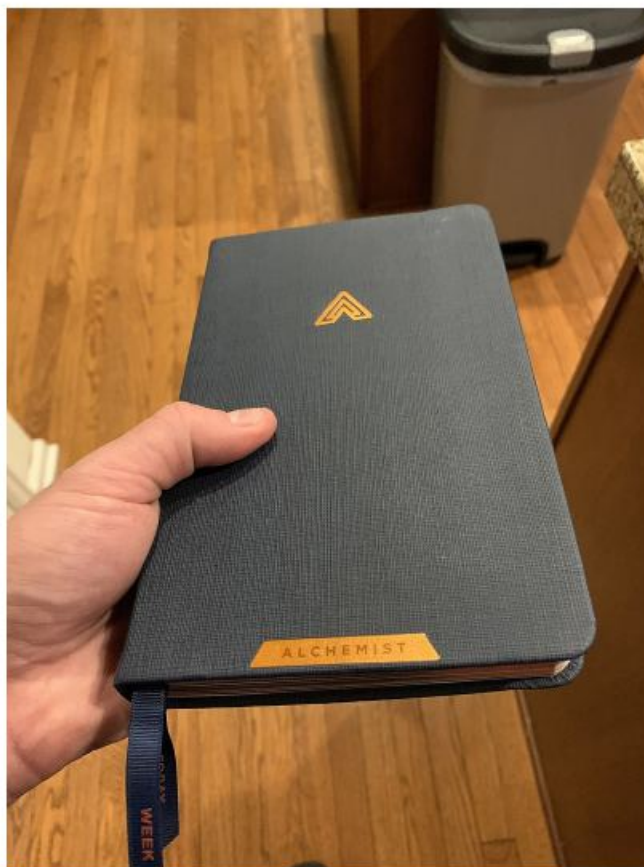
I was released from the hospital and switched to Humira. The explanation was that the Entyvio stopped working, which happens often with biologic medicines. So, I had high hopes for this stuff and I was pleasantly surprised. This was another chance to burn it all down and start over. Like a phoenix.



I did some research online, trying to understand my addiction and now my apparent Bulimia. I found something unique. Microdosing psilocybin mushrooms. This reminded me a lot of when I found BPC-157 so I let God take the wheel and help guide me through this. My intentions were simple. I wanted to "rewire" my brain to stop craving Adderall, fix my behavior, and understand why I never felt good enough. I knew if I figured that out, I would be able to deal with my Crohn's Disease and get back to that happy place.

I bought the grow kits online and kept the tub in a dark closet. I used PDF instructions and YouTube videos which were easy and really put the Fun in fungi. After I dried them and ground them into a powder, I put them in capsules and started to journal.

I wanted to detail everything that was happening to me, how I felt, and create a habit. In the beginning I felt different. A soft and bright happiness on the days I would microdose and I was very motivated to change. I started reading self-help books and really was obsessed with creating healthy habits. Replacing one bad habit with one good habit, one at a time.



If it wasn't for the microdosing and journaling I would have never seen it. I really truly believe that. I was clearly stuck in some sort of loop. I would get sick, go to the ER and then get sober and motivated. I would get triggered by the environment or other factors, then I would start to slip again. I would feel remorse and depression and start to binge and purge which would lead me to the ER where I would get sober, motivated and hop back into the loop. I knew that I was stuck but now I needed to get out. It was October and I needed to get sober so Samantha and I took Oliver and rented a Yurt.

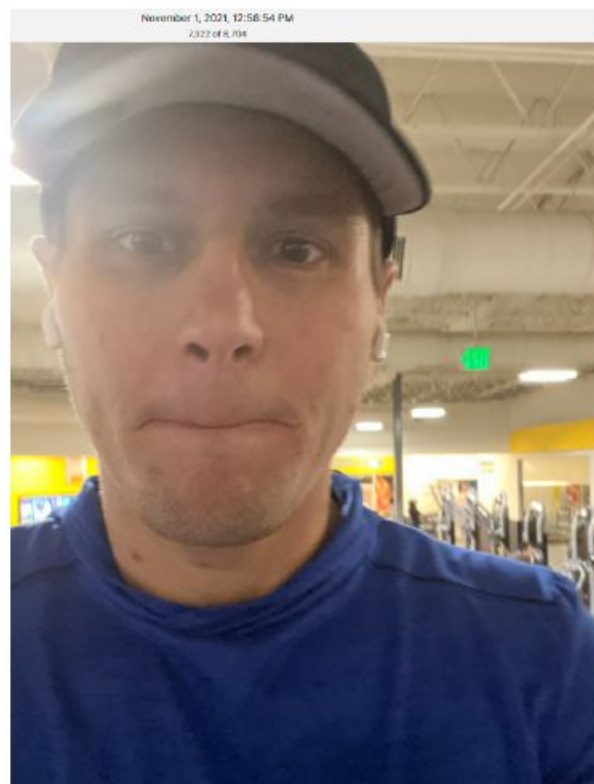
Disconnecting from the crazy pace at work is what I needed. It was nice to be out in the middle of Canon City, Colorado seeing a sky full of stars at night. I did some real deep reflecting on my life and if you are reading this, I highly recommend you take the time to disconnect and confront those thoughts you've been burying. We ate some edible cannabis on the last night, and I had an epiphany. For my whole adult life, I have never felt good enough. I made a decision to wake up and be proud of myself and to stand up for myself and put myself first. I always thought that it sounded selfish, but it really isn't. Love is the answer and putting yourself as a priority lets you love.



The rest of October was very sober, and I continued journaling. I could already see so many improvements just from holding myself accountable. I was honest to the journal and wrote to it like it was listening. I knew I was onto something, so I kept it going. November was coming up and I felt that I was ready for another challenge, so I came up with my own. **Non-stop November**

Every day, for 30 days I committed to going to the gym. My goal was simple. Exercise for 20 minutes and break a sweat. I prepared myself to start slow and celebrated every day like it was a new personal record. I scanned the gym and found the one machine I knew would kick my butt in 20 minutes and make me break a sweat. The Stairmaster was always available, no matter how packed the gym was. I started at 50% level 10 outa 20 and took deep breaths but barely broke a sweat. I was either listening to JRE or a book on audible.

This was my little moving meditation. I came back every day at the same time and after 3 sessions I made it to level 11. Then level 12, 13, 14 and 15 in just two short weeks. I started doing intervals of level 20 for a minute then level 10 for 4 minutes. I was really starting to get in shape, even my apple watch was noticing the difference. I think I found the missing piece.



My schedule was amazing. I would work from home 7 AM to 11 AM, had a two hour break and worked another 4 hours starting at 1 PM. In those 2 hours I was able to take Oliver for a walk and play fetch, go to the gym and exercise, come home and shower, eat lunch, and get back to work. I felt like I could do this forever. I was vibrating high until about mid-month.

"Hey Krys, You can't work the split schedule anymore. Upper management heard someone say "I wish I had a 2 hour lunch" and people started asking questions. I know you have Crohn's but I can't offer this schedule to everyone, so you have to go back to a normal shift".

I was in disbelief at first, but then I got really excited. I had a **gut** feeling that I needed to quit and for the first time in my life I was going to listen to my gut.

"Look, I'm really sorry" I said as my voice was skipping

"It's okay, It's not your.."

"I Quit!" I exclaimed, cutting his sentence short.

Confused, he confirmed "Really?"

Yes. I was done. The relief I felt was amazing. I knew that my job there was done otherwise this wouldn't be happening. I prioritized my health and wellness and stood up for myself when they tried to take it away. I kept my promise to myself and knew in my heart that although I didn't have a job lined up that I would find the job I am meant to do, and everything will work out.

For the rest of November, I continued to work out every day and now that I had an open schedule I spent more time reading books, going on long walks with my dog, and pushing myself slowly in the gym. My diet was very simple. I ate a carnivore/paleo style diet that was rich with grass-fed grass-finished meat. I was almost 60 days sober and coming up on 30 days fit.

My challenge was almost over, and I was excited to keep going. I took another deep journey within myself and really did some reflection. This time my epiphany was on the Stairmaster listening to a book by Phil M Jones called "Exactly where to start".

I needed to discover my purpose and follow my passion.

I took an inventory. I reviewed all my skills and really thought about what made me happy. I looked back into my journals and looked for patterns of happiness and I saw one common theme - Helping people.

So, if helping people is really my passion, then how can I spend December working toward pursuing my passion and finding my purpose?

Let's make it a challenge.

I was feeling uniquely energized toward the end of November and I was becoming more social, so I played into those feelings.

My challenge was simple.

For the next 30 days I will connect with 30 people and talk for 30 minutes (if possible). I wanted to hear other people's stories, share mine, and some days I would reach out to old friends and catch up. Networking became the ultimate goal and very quickly became the obvious next step in my evolution.

December was going to start soon, and it was time to make a decision. Was I going to share my story with as many people as possible and continue to follow my passion with a purpose - or - was I going to get a job, get back on Adderall and sabotage my existence?

The choice was obvious, but I solidified it with a simple trick that I learned in that last book. I wrote 3 letters to myself. One on my birthday 05/08/1989, and two more on this day, just a year and two years in the future - 11/22/2022 and 11/22/2023. I will never forget that date. My diagnosis anniversary.

"Taking the positive step of turning your problems into challenges and your limiting beliefs into puzzles, you very quickly create a natural road map of progressive steps."

Phil M. Jones

I shared my vision with the Internet. This was my breakthrough moment. I have never made it passed this point in my life.

I needed to share how I did it.

My motivation and positivity were reinforced by the world around me.

My goal is to connect all Crohn's survivors both who are sick and in remission. Through mentorship, coaching and education help heal the body, mind, and soul of all who suffer and encourage everyone to pay it forward.

I started a GoFundMe to raise money to start my show "Inflamed in the membrane" where I can have a platform to discuss all things IBD with experts, professionals and everyday people like me who have made it through.

This program is my gift to you. This is proof that no matter where you are in life, if you have the will, you can change.

You can do it.

"Are you paralyzed with fear? That's a good sign. Fear is good. Like self-doubt, fear is an indicator. Fear tells us what we have to do. Remember one rule of thumb: the more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we have to do it."

Steven Pressfield, The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle



My Resources

I want to share some important information for anyone who has crohn's disease and questions about my program or needs help in any way.

Please email me with any questions you have about the program or if you would like to be on the show. I do not charge any money for my advice and I want to make that clear. If you, or anyone you know, needs help then please reach out to me.

Special thanks to:

Chad at Dakota Organics who kind words and wisdom helped catapult me into remission. His CBG is a the best and I use it before every meditation session. <http://www.dakotaorganics.net>

Andrew at IBD coach who's drive and energy helped me see that we share the same vision and we are not alone. His free webinar changed the way I looked at IBD. I look forward to our future in this field.

Samantha who has been waiting for this day for a long time. Thank you so much for being there with me through the lowest point in my life. I love you.

Thank you

Today can be the day that you change your life forever.
Together we can end Crohn's disease and revolutionize the way that anyone who is diagnosed with any condition receives treatment.

Krys Kwiecien

Please email me at krys@crohns.coach with any questions, comments, or concerns. If you would like a free copy of the program in short format or any information on the mentioned methods I will be happy to discuss it FREE of charge. Please visit www.crohns.coach for more information about upcoming events and please join Andrew and his team at www.ibd.coach/webinar for the most comprehensive crohn's and colitis event created for FREE.

Be the hero of your own movie.

If your life was a movie and it started now.
Forget about whatever financial disasters you've had,
personal failures, relationship failures.
What would the hero of your life's movie do right now?
Do that. Do those things.
We define ourselves far too often by our past failures.
We look at our past, and we say, "Well, that's me."
That's not you.
You are this person: right now, you're the person who has
learned from those failures, and you can choose to be the
hero of your own movie right now.
Write down your goals.
Write down things you want to improve.
Write down things you won't tolerate from yourself.
Write down things you've done in the past that you never
want to see yourself do again.
And go forth.
From here, as the hero of your own movie.
Build momentum.
Build confidence and momentum with each good
decision that you make from here on out.
You can do it.
Anyone can do it.
We live in unique times.
We live in one of the rarest times in human history where
you can choose almost all the input that comes your
way, whether it's the movie that you watch, the books you
read, the podcasts you listen to.
You can choose to be inspired: do that.
Do that and be the hero of your own movie.

- Joe Rogan