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Scribbles from the Heart

Leukemia & Lymphoma
Foundation



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CONTENTS

About Us	iv
President's Message	v
Preface	vi
To My Fellow Story Scribblers...	1
My Dad, My HERO by Jumaini Ariff	2
Journeying with Me - Turning Life's Setbacks into Triumph by Lillian Yeo	4
The Unseen, Diverging Road by Augustin Khoo	6
To My Beloved Daughter by Irene Ng	8
Trust God! by Jesudas Monica	10

Hodgkin's Lymphoma #1 by Eriko	12
Abdul Hamid by Shazwana and Athikah	18
The Kopi Shop Story by Abdul Hamid B. Abdullah	22
Don't Waste Your Cancer by SHU	24
Super Active by Lukis B. Hamzah	28
Benjamin's Story by Benjamin Lew	30
Our Challenge of Life by T Dinesh Kumar	34
We Just Needed Validation, Nothing Else by Eriko	36
A Leukemia Patient in Remission by A Survivor of Chronic Myeloid Leukemia	40

About Us

THE Leukemia & Lymphoma Foundation (LLF) was registered as a non-profit, non-government funded society in 2002. It was approved by the Ministry of Health as an Institution of Public Character (IPC) in 2003.

Its primary mission is to provide financial assistance by paying for, either fully or in part, all costs related to the treatment of leukemia, lymphoma and all blood-related disorders. It subsidises the cost of drugs and the high costs of procurement and transplant.

One of the foundation's primary objectives is to support the well-being of the people who are facing the impact of a blood cancer diagnosis at any stage of the disease. LLF has been organising events on a regular basis for our beneficiaries and their family members in the hope to enable them to lead an active and fulfilled life. LLF hopes that these events will not only enhance bonding between the beneficiaries and their loved ones but also provide a source of motivation and relief from their daily stresses, thereby enabling them to continue their fight against the disease with renewed energy.



President's Message

BLOOD cancers such as leukemias and lymphomas can affect almost anyone, regardless of age or lifestyle. With the help of modern medicines and expert doctors, many patients can now successfully win the battle against this disease. More important than these external factors is the patient's own personal inner strength and will to live.

This book contains many personal stories of bravery, struggles, emotions and triumphs that will serve as a window into life and a source of inspiration to all.

Dr Ren Ee Chee



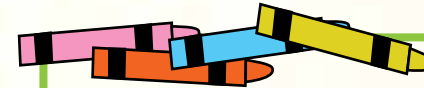
Preface

WORDS are how we convey our deepest emotions and talk about things we value the most. This little book does not have stories; it contains scribbles that belong to people who have seen it all and gone through difficult times. Some of them are survivors and some are family members of those who have left us. Some have thanked the Almighty and some have learnt from experience. These scribbles are original thoughts, unedited and they touch our hearts.

This is our first attempt to publish these scribbles and drawings by people who had seen it all.

Please give us your valuable feedback and if this book is well-received, we will be encouraged to embark on the next edition with more expressions.

Nik Gupta
Chief Operating Officer



To My Fellow Story Scribblers...

My Warmest Gratitude to Leukemia & Lymphoma Foundation for embarking on the Story Scribbling Project. It is a humbling experience to work along side the BRAVE Men and Women who are surviving the trials that come along with any Cancer diagnosis.

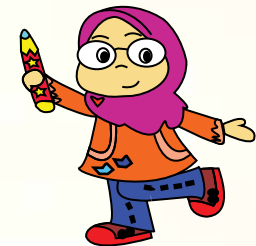
May you stay STRONG and LIVE your life to the fullest.

To fellow Caregivers, Families and Dear Friends of a patient; You are the pillars of strength to your loved ones. Your SMILE, Comforting Hugs, Sincere Warmth and Concern mean the World to them.

I hope the Story Scribbling Project has given you the opportunity to spread the Love and Support as well as STRENGTH to others and for some, the closure you needed to see you through to the next step in LIFE.

God Bless You All!

With Lots of Love and Warmest Memories...



Jumaini Ariff
(Story Scribbler)

Title: My Dad, My HERO

I'm NOT Giving UP!

TRUST ME



Written by: Jumaini Ariff

My Dad is a man of very little words but his nods of approval means the World to me. Deep in his silence, he is battling Kidney Cancer.

He refused Chemotherapy as he can't bear the thought of seeing us upset when the pain overwhelms him. He opted for another alternative to fight this battle. For that I salute you.

My Dad is BRAVE. He IS MY HERO.

He has so much strength to fight this disease and don't intend to give up.

Whenever I feel overwhelmed by my troubles, I am reminded of him. He is facing so much uncertainty that is more worrying than any of my problems.

I have NOTHING to complain...

I ♥ You, BAPAK.

Title: Journeying with Me - Turning Life's Setbacks into Triumph

EVERYTHING
THRU
PRAYER



Written by: Lillian Yeo

Life little challenges really put things into perspective for me. Being diagnosed with Follicular Lymphoma, Stage 2..... back in April 2011, didn't seem as daunting as what I have perceived.

After going through battery of test alone [hubby was overseas then] & finally being diagnosed, I did had a good shedding of tears to release all the fears & ambiguity surrounding my illness in general.

But never did I dwell in self-pity, after that day.....even when I broke the news to my dad & he asked out of devastation: "Hey, how did you get yourself into this?" In fact, I was the one trying to calm him down, & put things into perspective that it's not all gloom & doom. As for my mum, she kept more to herself, didn't really know what to say /how to support until this day.

I've gone through stages of (i) Acceptance, but not defeat (ii) Embarking on the unknown - treatment options (iii) Having a Positive outlook - even during relapse (iv) Advocating living life to the fullest.

Right now, am seizing the day running for cancer charity events [10K run], taking up ballet, going for Zumba class & volunteer as befriender in hospice. [to walk thru last journey with those affected with life challenges]

Title: The Unseen, Diverging Road



Written by: Augustin Khoo

We are always so closed and you willing to sacrifice for the greater good of us [family]. You taught us to be faithful in our spiritual life. It was a hurricane to me knowing you to have leukemia. Seeing you in such agony, from a healthy person to a weak and unable to walk people, no longer can congest the food you like, my heart was like stabbed ~~by~~ thousands of times. Promises are broken and left me alone to fulfill. I strongly believe that you are in God's embrace now and enjoy your eternity. The Road after this diverging point will be an unknown to me. I will strive hard to become a doctor and help more people in pain and meet you in heaven.

Title: To My Beloved Daughter



Written by: Irene Ng

Though we always hope for miracle but at last you have to go far far away just because the leukemia is really a killer to you.

We miss you but when think of the torture you faced we prefer you go with holy mother. We pray your soul should return to heaven already and be very happy there.

We sure will meet again in heaven one day. Please wait for us.

Title: Trust God!



Written by: Jesudas Monica

God was my only hope. He provided for doctors, nurses, medicine, donor, money, strength and all that was required.

Life goes on with his grace and faith in him. He that has started the good work in me will bring it to completion.
TRUST GOD FIGHT CANCER.

Title: Hodgkin's Lymphoma #1



Written by: Eriko

我也看到两个月亮

Hodgkin Lymphoma 日记 · #1

今天是化疗的第一天。

这一天也是我正式变成一个比玻璃还要脆弱的人的日子。

化疗将一个人的抵抗力降到最低点。

这个时候的我不能感染到病毒，否则就很麻烦了。

曾经在小娴的《离别曲》中看到钢琴老师夏绿萍拒绝化疗

，因为她不要自己在弹钢琴的时候头发大把地掉。

此时我忽然能够理解她的感受。

我没有钢琴，但是我有吉他。

吉他好像生病了，我也担心木头上那层湿气会渗入木头里。

化疗还有两个多钟头才会完成。

不知道我得副作用会是什么。

我希望是肚子超饿、头发多到像猿人

、胃口超好、抵抗力比变形金刚还要强。



PRELUDE



合上村上春树的《1Q84》第三本，
我其实为故事里的天吾和青豆感到很开心。



他们走出了对他们来说危险的世界。

那个世界里有两个月亮，一个我们常看得见的月亮和一个比较小的、绿色的月亮。

那里有一股神秘、邪恶的力量在左右他们。

同时，我却也感到很孤独。这样的世界，我此时坠入了。

当时的我人在医院病房。很庆幸那间病房的风景很漂亮、
阳光很明媚、

护士很友善都不停地喊我的名字，偶尔还会和我聊天。

对面住的是一位老太太，她是个夜猫

她是个夜猫子常常我们两都会聊天至半夜，

给护士赶回病床去。护士都叫她

Mdm Leung。还有许多护士都对我很好。



好端端的我为什么住院？
因为癌症。



至今应该许多人都知道我患病的事吧。说真的，

我不能接受。刚毕业的我，

一份记者工作正等着我，许多憧憬与希望此时幻灭。

庆幸的或许是能够和朋友先到普吉岛和墨尔本走了一趟才发现生病了。

我整整哭了好几晚，为自己的不幸而哭，接着是愤怒，

气自己为什么要生病。

明明毕了业，工作能让家人过得好一点。

我的家人又有什么罪要承受我的病？

不仅生活没有变得宽裕，而接踵而来的是为我住院而忙，

并且为我承担医药费。



当时，我真希望时间就倒退，让这一刻不要来临。

然后停滞在另一个世界。可是，当我回过神来，

我已来到类似天吾和青豆曾去过的1Q84。

所谓绝望，我彻彻底底地体会到。护士们首先看到我时，

是那种讶意，然后是惋惜。

我当然不甘心。一直以来，我的饮食比任何人都要注意，

我也积极努力学游泳。然而，我开始明白，

有些事不需要理由，randomness或许就是这一回事。

最痛苦的日子是醒来时，发现自己不再家里。

还有做梦时，自己是健康的却在醒来时发现不是。

以泪入眠，含泪醒来。这样的日子，还好有许多的人支持。

上个礼拜住院的我，有很多很多亲戚朋友都来看我。

打电话来的说了一堆惹我感动到哭的话，

那些来的家人虽然担心，

眼神里确实那么坚定地相信我会治愈。

那些朋友个个来闹场的，惹得我哭笑不得。

还有我的几位老师，让我感到很温暖。



当然，说我没事是假的。可是，我在这些人的支持下学会调试、应对。

他们能够帮助的是无限量提供祝福、精神上的支持，毕竟战场上的军队是我自己。

到后来的眼泪，不是因为悲伤，而是感动。

如果，你和我说话时看见一些眼泪，多半是我想起了那些祝福与关心。

请别为我担心。



Title: Abdul Hamid



Written by: Shazwana

I Feel sad, because my father is in hospital. When I was 2 my mum told me about this. All my cousin no that my father is in hospital and my cousin is very sad and my friend. And I feel very sad because this is the first time that I see my father in hospital. And the doctor say to me that I can see my father because your father is sick. I hope my father can love me. I am very very sad.

Title: Abdul Hamid



Written by: Athikah

I feel very sad when I got knew that my father sick. When I was P1 my mum told me about this. On that time, my father was in the hospital as I have not born yet. It is suddered happening to my father. All my family felt very sad when the doctor said that my father had a cancer and leukemia. I feel sad from now onwards. I hope my father will be strong and fight his sickness.

Title: The Kopi Shop Story



Written by: Abdul Hamid B. Abdullah

MY NAME: ABDUL HAMID I HAVE THIS SICKNESS SINCE 2001. THE DOCTOR ESTIMATE AND SAID THAT I CAN STAY FOR 3 YEARS ONLY MY MOTHER, WIFE AND ME CRYING AND I JUST MY FIRST DAUGHTER. BUT NOW I JUST TO SHARE JUST THE SIMPLE STORY LAST FEW YEAR AGO I WAS THINKING ABOUT MY SICKNESS ONLY, BUT NOW THINK ABOUT MY SICKNESS, WHAT I NOW THE MORE U THINK THE MORE U GET SICK. THANKS TO GOD FOR GIVING ME LIVE LONG IN THIS WORLD. THANK YOU.

Title: Don't Waste Your Cancer

Yes, you heard me correctly - don't waste your cancer. For the longest time, I thought cancer was a curse. I asked myself, "why was I so *suay* to get cancer when I was only 29?" I, however, eventually came round to seeing cancer as an opportunity not to be wasted. It took a while for me to recognize this. Admittedly, I still occasionally doubt this when I reflect upon what I went through, and what it did to me. But cancer can indeed be a blessing, if you choose to see it as being one.

Here are four reasons why:

1. It is a great opportunity to pause and think about your life.

Regardless of age, we live very busy lives. We rarely stop to think about where we're going, and why in that direction.

 Written by: SHU 



While cancer treatment may be painful and uncomfortable, it forces you to drop what you're doing, even temporarily. This break gives you space to take a step back and think about what you're doing with your life, where you're going with it, and if you want to make changes to it. Cancer is an opportunity to seriously think about what is important to you, and you alone.

2. It is a convenient excuse and reason for change.

Can't say no to people? Want to do something dramatically different but are afraid of what people will think? Just say you had cancer, and people will immediately understand. Many won't seek explanations or justifications. Most will be supportive of you. Cancer can empower you to do things you would otherwise.



3. It is a reminder to not to be so hard on yourself.

There is immense pressure to get ahead in life, to be the best in whatever you do. And when we under-perform, or feel like we're not measuring up to expectations, we feel inadequate. But cancer is a reminder to not be too hard on yourself. You survived a major illness. You've earned the right to be less demanding of yourself.

4. It can save you from yourself.

You may have been diagnosed with cancer at a relatively young age. When your friends are healthy and enjoying life, that seems terribly unfair. But cancer can be a timely reminder that you have to take care of yourself, and the sooner you start living a healthier life, the better.



If not for this reminder, you might continue to live an unhealthy lifestyle, and this could result in other serious health problems in future. So, by helping you make better lifestyle choices now, cancer could actually save you from future diseases.

Title: Super Active





Written by: Lukis B. Hamzah

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS SO HAPPY
NO WORRY NO RESPONSIBILITY
MY WORK PLAYING GAME, SWIMMING
CYCLING AND FOOTBALL. BUT NOW MY
LIFE HAS CHANGED. I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH
LEUKEMIA. MY WORLD CAME CRASHING DOWN. LIFE
WAS DIFFICULT AND WHAT MADE IT HARDER
FINANCIAL FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT.
NOW I HAVE WORRY AND I HAVE RESPONSIBILITY.
I WANT THE CLOCK TURNING
BACK.

Title: Benjamin's Story

I have been diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2001 before my 'O' levels. I had to do chemotherapy during that time but still decided to carry on with my 'O' levels. I spent time studying in the hospital and doing the treatment but the chemotherapy was very taxing on my body. When my O's came, I did my exams in a separate room from my peers because I was given extra time due to my condition. It was hard for me to concentrate on studying because I felt weak and I was also very affected with the hair loss that was taking place due to the treatment. However I managed to finish my O's after dropping 2 subjects, taking the minimum requirement of 6 subjects to concentrate on my treatment. I took a break after my 'O' levels to continue my treatment. My results enabled me to enrol in a Polytechnic where I am currently studying my second year. In

 Written by: Benjamin Lew 

one year, I have been through three courses of chemotherapy but the treatments did not seem to be effective. The treatments did not affect my study schedule in poly and I was still able to continue my schooling whilst doing the treatment till about six months ago.

Then the doctor told me that I had to do a bone marrow transplant. To do this transplant, I had to be admitted for about a month or two which meant I had to temporarily stop my studies, and I had to find a donor. My family members were not a match but luckily I managed to find a Brazilian donor who matched me with a compatibility of 7/8. Thus I got admitted and the month I spent in the hospital could be the worst month of my life as far as I can remember. I had to go through a regime of chemotherapy and radiation several times a day for three consecutive days which really wore me out. It took the hardest toll



on me out of all the treatments I have done. I developed sores in my mouth and throat due to the treatment and even drinking water was not an easy task for me. I could not eat and therefore I was put on a drip so that I would still be able to get nutrients.

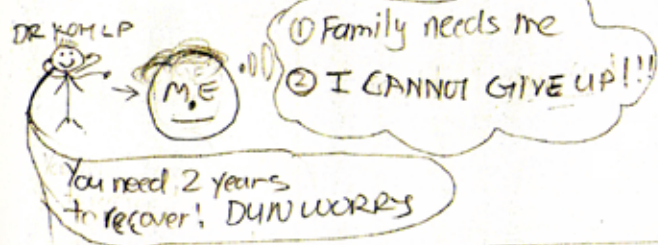
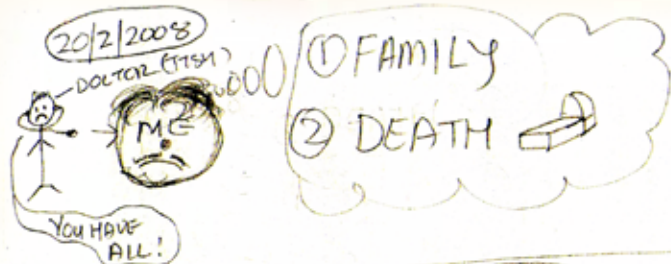
It was a very trying time for my family as well. They had to shuttle to and from home every day and my mother had to quit her job to take care of me. My mother even stayed in the hospital with me during weekdays as I was in pain during the first few weeks. But luckily I only stayed for three weeks in the hospital as I took a shorter time to recover compared to other patients as I was younger.

A couple of months back after my transplant, I did another scan to find out that the cancer in my body had shrunk after the transplant but



there was still residue of cancer inside me. Upon hearing this news, it was natural that I felt sad. Many times through my battle with cancer, I was disappointed and felt helpless, but thanks to my family and friends who have always given me support, they have made the journey more bearable for me. Despite knowing that I still have this cancer inside me, I know that I have to remain strong for my family and myself in order to defeat it. I also thank the nurses and doctors for taking good care of me as well as the Leukemia & Lymphoma Foundation for helping us cope with our situation. Even though the journey may be tough now, I hope that I will one day be able to defeat cancer.

Title: Our Challenge of Life



CHEMO	SCT	ICU	RECOVERY
BODY MIND ↓↓↓ ↓↓↓	BODY MIND ↓↓ ↑↑	BODY MIND ↓↓↑ ↑	

1/2/2009
 BACK TO WORK LOH' → SHARE AWARENESS AND SUPPORT GROUP

+ WHAT HAS HAPPENED, ITS FOR GOOD.
 WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN, ITS FOR GOOD

POSITIVE ALWAYS!

Written by: T Dinesh Kumar

First thoughts were family and death. loss hope until I met Doctor @ NUH.

Gained confidence. Always kept family in mind. Made it a point and remind myself "I CANNOT GIVE UP!!!"

WENT through a tough ride. But always practice "mind over body". Easy to say, difficult to practice.

Wanted to keep my mind out of the ordeal. Wanted to go back to work. Doing so, body gets trained, mind gets occupied.

Always want to share experience. I do not want anyone to go thru what my family and I went thru. ☺

Title: We Just Needed Validation,
Nothing Else

Many a times friends who are concern about me, give me advice, encouragement or even scolding to make sure I do not sink into depression with the cancer episode going on. But most of the time, it isn't really what we need.

Sometimes, I even got tired of all these and I figure out pretending to be fine is the best solution. But again, when my acting goes too well, people start to think I'm perfectly fine and okay to go on with life, which in actual fact I'm not. And then, it hurts me when my closest friends also think this way. This is when I start running away.

I finally met Shu, a fellow Hodgkin's Lymphoma young patient I know on a US support forum. He's a Singaporean though, residing in London till last year. This makes me wonder why


 **Written by:** Eriko 



we Singaporeans have to seek support from a US forum and not a local one. Simply, there isn't any form of emotional support or support of any kind in Singapore for us. It's such a shame. After 6 months of virtual email exchanges, we had a long and hearty chat at Starbucks.

His friend Daniel, who had testicular cancer once said, when we're feeling all down and sad, what we really needed was just some form of validation of our emotions. It struck me so hard; my heart was a little sour at that point.


Many people simply think that once treatment is over, things will go back to normal for me. Telling me even if it's not immediately, it will eventually. But do they really understand what we will face in the future? And it hurts me even more when it's my closest friends who tell me



that. Honestly, it sounds more like a dismissal to me rather than trying to say "think on the bright side."

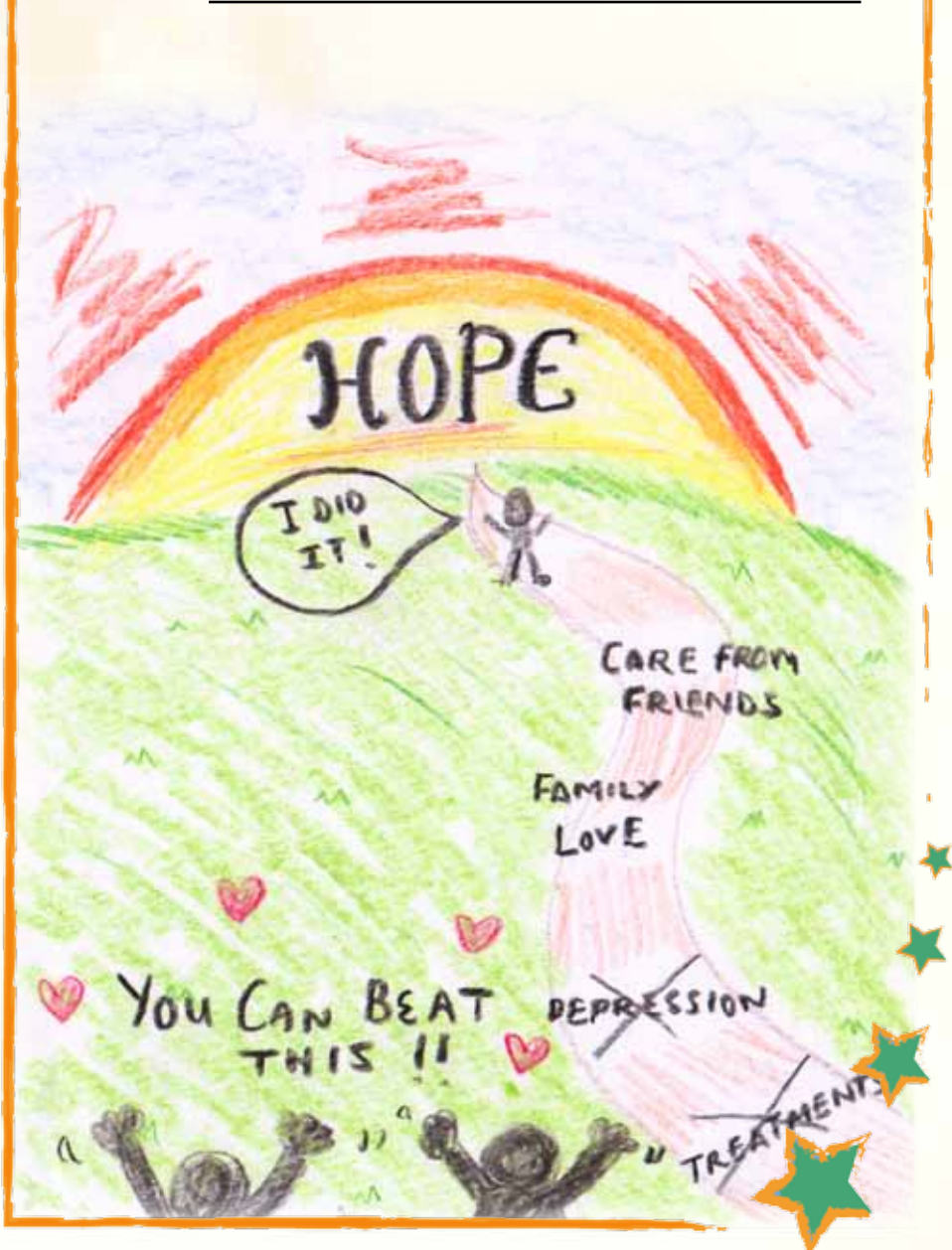
My Brazilian fellow Hodgkin's friend, Marina, recently posted this column written by a girl who had leukemia. Her words touched me and it was so true.





Cancer magnifies the in-betweenness of young adulthood: you're not a child anymore, yet you're not fully ready to live in the adult world, either. After my diagnosis, I moved back into my childhood bedroom. And as I get sicker, I increasingly rely on my parents to take care of me. But at the same time, I've had no choice but to grow up fast. Daunting questions that most of my peers won't have to consider for many more years have become my urgent, everyday concerns:



How will I hold onto health insurance if I'm unable to work? Will I be able to have children? How long will I live? ... Cancer has forced me to pause my life at a time when my peers are just beginning theirs. For my friends, most of the young adults in their 20s, this is an exciting time as they look forward to starting new jobs, travelling the world, going to parties, dating and finding love, and all the rest of the small and big milestones that are part of early adulthood. Like my peers, I have yet to fully define who I want to become. But as a young cancer patient, it's difficult to see ahead when I'm fighting for my life. I don't know what the future holds. I just know I want to be there. - Suleika Jaouad

Title: A Leukemia Patient in Remission



 **Written by:** A Survivor of Chronic 
Myeloid Leukemia  

During my treatment, there were many times that I feel like giving up. With the love and care from my family and friends, there was no excuse for me to bury myself in depression.

The doctors and nurses in the ward also gave their best efforts to make sure that we received the right treatment. For myself, for everyone who cared for me, I hanged on each day and hoped that tomorrow will be a better day.

I finally recovered. I cherished every moment that I have now. And I have learnt that no matter how difficult the journey in life gets, never give up on hope.

Always try to be positive.

Thank You
for reading...