



DONALD'S JOURNAL.

9.30.11

I'm not sure what the journal entry will have to do with the project, but it should be interesting. I have been on Atriplu now for a year. I have not been on any other form of therapy. Four months ago my CD4 was 1102, VL was 55. This week my CD4 was 1337 and VL was 127. I felt frustrated because I was almost certain I was going to be undetectable, if not unquantifiable. This is when I try to separate the medical side of my mind and the emotion of it all. I know my doctor at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville is pleased with my numbers. It's the same thing I would tell my patients. It doesn't stop you from psychologically wanting to hear that magical word...undetectable. We spent the majority of the time talking about my weight. I have never had a weight problem. I always have had a body of a runner @ 165lbs. I'm now @ 195lbs. I joined a gym today with my partner. Let's see how much I weigh after this 30-day project.

10.1.11

Nothing much happened today. Except watching FL lose to Alabama, which was exciting to watch the Gators fall. When Heath came home from work, we went to Season's 52 for dinner. It's a normal spot for our friends to go to on the weekend. Douglas met us there and we had a fantastic evening.

10.02.11

Today was Sunday Funday! The weather was amazing and for the 1st time we could have brunch outside. After that Heath and I did some shopping at an outdoor mall. We took our yellow lab, Achilles, to Davis Island to play in the park and watch the sunset over the Tampa Bay. @ 9pm I did a radio interview, based out of Philadelphia called POZ I AM. They asked me to be a guest for an hour, and talk about my story. We talked about being infected in a hospital setting via occupational exposure during a trauma. It was a fun experience and the hour flew by. I went to iTunes the show and saw my interview was already uploaded to iTunes. I have not listened to it yet, but I have downloaded the pod cast.

10.03.11

Today I spoke with Bristol Myers Squibb to discuss the events on 11/2 and 11/16. I will be working with them to help educate the community about HIV, and tell my story.

10.04.11

Heath and I went to a local bar in Ybor City. It's our regular spot to go with Douglas and Eric to play darts and catch up. Lately, Eric has been very needy towards us. For days his insecurities have been getting the best of him, it is starting to cause a rift. We find ourselves cracking jokes at his expense when he is not around because he is getting on our nerves. I say what's on my mind in front of him and it comes across as I'm being the asshole. Truth be told I'm just speaking what is on everybody's mind.

10.05.11

Had stomach issues today. We have been researching some nasty species of bacteria in the lab. I have to remind myself it's not medical student syndrome and it's just an upset stomach.

10.06.11

I had a dream last night. I was on a plane with my friend Rob, we were just talking. Rob was the first person around my age to have HIV that I knew of. I am 27 and he was 30. Rob moved from Houston to Seattle earlier this year for a job promotion. That afternoon I called his cell and it went right to his voicemail. I went to his Facebook to send him a message, as I was on there I noticed all these posts from people saying they would miss him. As I read, I found out my friend died in his sleep Sat. night Sept. 10, 2011. I was in a state of shock all day. He was the first person to die from HIV related causes. I started to play "what if" games and it was driving me crazy. I was scared, thinking, is this going to happen to me? Am I going to die in my sleep? I was angry at myself for not calling him sooner. I tried to explain to my partner, Heath, what I was felling, but he is HIV neg. We have a serodiscordant relationship. I know he loves me and some days I think I am too hard on him. He is always there for me, and he tries to understand my battle with HIV, but he never truly will. I plan to keep it that way. I have patients that die all the time, but I never had to face my own mortality by losing a friend with the same disease that I do.

-- Rob God Bless you, you will be missed.—

10.07.11

Heath and I went to see my surgeon today for a follow up. My tumor is back and I'll need surgery once again. Not what I wanted to hear, but it needs to come out. Surgery will be 11/9/11. I went and had happy hour at Brio with Eric. We talked about his insecurities, so hopefully he will chill out now.

10.08.11

FSU lost today against Wake Forest 30-35. That was a disaster. Our season is over. They should fire the coach. Heath and I met up with Douglas and Eric for sushi after that we went to the movies to see the Ides of March. Great movie! After the movie we all went out to Bradley's. Eric decided he was going to drink. He drank so much he fell down outside the bar, blacked out and started to vomit all over himself. It took us until about 0500 hrs to get his ass taken care of. I did not feel like dealing with a drunk all night. While Douglas and Heath went to get the car, I stayed with Eric. Well, TPD and TFD pulled up and asked if I wanted him transported. I said no. All in all it was an interesting evening.

10.09.11

It rained all day, so no going to the island with Achilles. Heath and I met up with Douglas for brunch. Douglas wanted to have a double date night with his partner, Jordan. So that night we went to dinner at a nice Columbian place. We went to a wine bar after that for an after dinner drink. Then we had game night at their house. We played Phase 10. I won the game and I think Jordan was upset I won. We all had a blast. I hadn't laughed that hard in such a long time.

10.10.11

I talked to Dr. Goss to have my mom to get in to see him. Her lipids are dangerously high. Her abdominal CT showed Aortic misrations, and chronic narrowing of the arteries. Her atherosclerosis is getting very bad. I worry about what will happen. I have a 10-year-old brother, and she is going through a divorce with my stepfather. It's bad when you mother tells your stepfather that it's a shame the wrong man died. Meaning my father. I can't believe it's been two years since dad passed away. A day doesn't go by that I don't miss him. Apparently I need to get my mom admitted into the hospital. She looks like she is having symptoms of colitis and pancertitis just another great day. Heath and I looked at a house today. Construction should be completed at the end of the month. I really think we would love it. But, I'm trying not to get my

hopes up. My advisor is finally back from maternity leave so we can get back working on our publication. Our focus has been paramedics and how they handle sharps in the field. Since that's how I contracted HIV was from a patient, this research has been right up my ally. We are working on a focus group for the medics. The goals are sharing my story to transmit the message if it happened to any of them.

1.) the risk of transmission is real

2.) emphasize the role of PEP

3.) needle sticks can be prevented through use safer needle devices

That's our focus, and I am excited to use my HIV status to help first responders. I can now use how I was infected as a medic and hopefully prevent other medics from facing my nightmare.

10.11.11

Today I had a conference call with Pi Kappa Alpha Memorial Headquarters, about conducting a membership review for their chapter in Tampa. I have a feeling we will be revoking the brotherhood status of about ¾ of this chapter. In the end it will be for the best. I wonder how much longer I will volunteer as Chapter Advisor for a group mostly comprised of kids who do not care. I know I have put together an amazing board to help guide these kids, and I hope after the Membership Review this chapter can get back on track for the true values of PIKE. I also found out about another publication I will be working on. There is a grant being funded by JEMS on hand hygiene. Again, this will be focusing on Fire Rescue. We have to wait for 1 or 2 approval. I spoke with Dr. Strauss in Canada today about a consult, seeing Nana. He gave me three other doctors in the States to talk to if she cannot wait until April 2012. Nana sees Dr. Goss on Thursday and after that appointment, I will speak with Dr. Goss to decide what to do.

10.12.11

Today I entered Heath and I into a contest for Instinct Magazine. It's basically a newlywed game. I sent in the picture of us from me in NYC 2009. It was snowing and we were in Central Park. It is one of our favorite pictures. I had to describe our relationship in 100 words or less. That was difficult. I mostly talked about being in a serodiscordant relationship. As Heath likes to call it a magnetic relationship I think there is so much to learn from our relationship, with me being positive and he being negative. So much hope to offer those that are positive and think they will be alone forever. It's not true, and I thank God everyday that Heath is in my life.

10.13.11

Today is my grandparents' wedding anniversary 60 years. You just don't see that kind of love and commitment anymore. It's a shame. I also went to Dr. Braun for the very last time! I need my 3rd series for the HIV vaccine. Dr. Braun should not be a doctor, he skipped the part of graduation when they recited the Hippocratic Oath. He is in it for the money and does not like the fact I know more about HIV then he has forgotten on a drunken stupor. My surgeon has me going to a new doctor. I love her and she knows me better than Braun. I see the new doctor on 11/01/11.

10.14.11

@ about 0350 hrs. Jordan asked me to come over for a drink. Jordan and I have the same hours, so it's not uncommon. We had a few drinks and a nice cigar. When Douglas woke up @ 0645 to get ready for work I left them to have some alone time together. @ 1000 Heath and I went to meet Ryan Whites Mother. After that she told her story to a group of people. Such a courageous woman. To stare HIV in the face through a mother's eyes and beat it back with a stick. It's sad that after all these years there is still so much stigma with HIV. I worry that will always be the case.

10.15.11

Watched football most of the day FSU won, FL and USF lost. Great day in College football if you ask me!

10.16.11

Today we had a dinner party for the season premier of the Walking Dead.

10.17.11

I saw the surgeon again. She said it looks like I have yeast around my former incision sites. This is confusing, as my T- cells are over 1300 and no V, so she gave me a Rx and told me to call Mayo clinic before I start the diflucon to make sure there is no interaction with the Atripla. The only thing I can think of is it would affect my hepatic enzyme CYP3A4 metabolism. I would think Dr. Keating will be ok with that since it's just a 3-day supply. I spoke with two people from COGEMX today about giving a presentation on Living with HIV for Bristol Myers Squibb. I have two presentations set up and confirmed- 11/2 will be at the Health Dept. and 11/16 will be in Ybor city. I am excited to see the people I will be teaching. If I can just touch one person's life it will be worth it.

10.18.11

Heath and I went to see the Broadway Musical, The Addams Family. We went with Eric. It was a great evening of dinner and going to the theatre. After the play, we had to stop by Douglas' house. He hurt his R shoulder, probably while working out. He asked me to check his shoulder out to see the extent of his injury. He will be fine.

10.19.11

Today went and got my hair cut, later that night I met up with a friend from high school. He is a Delta flight attendant, so it's rare we have the chance to meet up. He is HIV- but like Heath and I, he is in a serodiscordant relationship. It was nice catching up. We had a few drinks and called it a night.

10.20.11

Working on the project logo for the research we are doing at USF. Firefighter paramedics being stuck with sharps. It's looking like a fire patch and a needle going through the center of the patch. It's harder than I thought to make this logo.

10.21.11

Heath and I drove to Tallahassee for the football game.

10.22.11

We went to a tailgate after I finished my HIV/ AIDS surveillance project for class. FSU played Maryland and won big time! It was a great game and we had a blast. Later we met up downtown with some friends.

10.23.11

Life is great! Drove home and we met up with Douglas for dinner. We went to Texas de Brazil and had after dinner cigars over the water. One of the best nights and weekend for that matter.

10.24.11

Had an advisory board meeting to discuss membership review. After that Heath and I went to Douglas and Jordan's house for a wonderful dinner and game night.

10.25.11

I had 3 calls today from the Health Dept. informing me in a very indignant tone that I needed to bring in current lab work or I would not be allowed to pick up my Atripla. First of all, I am not a six year old, you only need to call me once! Secondly it's none of your business why I go to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville to see my infectious disease doc! I have no faith in the health care system in FL. Gov. Rick Scott is only making it worse. Yes, I would rather drive 4 hrs to see a good doctor than to be subjected to the horrific culture of health care in Tampa.

10.26.11

Today I drove to St. Pete to do the photo/video shoot for this project. I am excited to see the outcome of this project. I am hoping that it will shed new light on HIV/AIDS. In retrospect I can no longer imagine my life without HIV in it. HIV has afforded me so many opportunities that I never would have had. This virus has turned into a blessing and not a curse, Don't get me wrong, I still daydream about what a cure would look like. I imagine a global celebration, much like the end to WWII. I just want to see that day; I just want to be there.



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