

Accepting Illness with Hope

Serious illness is a journey, a hopeful journey, with an unknown destination...

Hope is the space between symptoms and diagnosis, between diagnosis and prognosis. It is the wrestling match between science and compassion; between body and spirit, between pain and relief. It is the dilemma between fearing to be alone and hungering for privacy. Hoping is waiting ... for the organism to heal and the spirit to rekindle.

The hope for survival is not the only hope,,, Hoping is knowing someone is making an effort to help, that family is never far away, that the system cares, that what happens is the best of technology and the best of humanness. Hoping is being attended by people who understand caring makes a difference...

Hoping is being treated ... as a person, by people who understand this could happen to them. It is knowing there are no secrets and being a partner on the treatment team. Hoping is being encouraged to do as much as possible for one's self. Hoping is trying again, moving against the odds, knowing everything that can be done is being done, knowing the caring will go on when the limits of science are reached.

The suffering humbles us. The hoping takes us forward. We come to understand that we are among many who become ill, among many who hurt and fear, and who need, and who cannot explain the unusual experiences we come to trust, the experiences for which we have no words. There is a knowing ... that emerges from deep within us, that speaks from another dimension of life.

Modified from Cenneno, A. (1999). Hope and Illness. In Living with chronic illness: Redefining normal (2005). Retrived 4-6-10 from Autoimmune Support Group Website at http://aces_autoimmune.tripod.com/copingb.htm