

Here I am staring at a blank empty page, trying to figure out how do I start this letter.

To whom it may concern? Dear Sirs and Madams? Dear Doctors?

How do you start a letter to express the millions of feelings and emotions that run through a person's mind when you discover that you have cancer?

What do say when you start a chemo treatment and all you feel is the sickness running through your body?

Where does the mind go when you find out that you have beaten this disease, for now?

All I can say for my part is "I don't know". You see, I am very fortunate, I do not have cancer. I do not know what it is like to discover that I have this disease eating away a part or parts of my body. I have no clue what so ever as the pain a person endures when he or she is undergoing a chemo treatment. The seeming endless hours of being in a hospital. Looking at the days go by and not knowing if you'll see another bright sunny spring morning, to feel a summer breeze caress your skin, to look upon the colors of autumn or even feel the first snow flake melt on the tip of your nose.

I can honestly say that I am ignorant of what happens to a person who has Hodgkin lymphoma or Multiple myeloma.

I am 45 yrs old and I am ignorant.

But, I try to understand.

I am very lucky. I love my job. A few months ago my manager called me, Yes, I am what you can call an artist, a musician, a composer, to some people a moocher or even a bum.

My manager called me to tell me the surprising conversation she had with this lady. My manager was very humbled. She told me that April called her to express her gratitude and how her faith in herself was sustained by my music during her treatment for her cancer. It was my turn to be very humbled. She described how she found out about my music by accident one day. And since then listening to it made her happy and smile and almost forget about the treatments.

April speaks English and I compose music in French. I am even more humbled. After listening to her absolutely inspiring story I started thinking.

If it were not for the care and the help that she received from you, she would not be here today making every effort that she can to help to find ways to stop this disease.

We don't always avail ourselves of the opportunity to say thank you.

When health care is in crisis and under tight budget restraints, I, and I hope many more, want to express gratitude to you the doctors, the nurses and the support staff of the Jewish Hospital of Montreal for the continuing care and commitment that you give patients under difficult circumstances.

You have been there with words of comfort, with smiles and with suggestions. Always trying to find the better solution to treat and win the battle against this sickness.

For those who are enjoying better health because of doctors, nurses and volunteers, please don't keep your gratitude under wraps. Share it with the people who made it happen.

As I look at this page I see that it is not as blank as I thought it was. I cannot describe the gratitude and respect that I have for all of you. There are no words that can come close to expressing the joy of seeing another person coming out of this darkness and to be able to feel the light shine once again.

There is maybe one word that can come close to encompassing everything that you do. Hope.

Thank you for giving us "hope"

I will finish off this letter like I have finished a thousand others before this one but with a better understanding of the meaning of "Hope".

And I know now how I want to start this letter, Dear Friend, without you there would be no Hope.

Amitiés

Blou