

IT'S JUST A BAD DAY PRESENTS

CHRONICALLY GRATEFUL

30 DAY CHALLENGE

JULIE CERRONE, CHHC

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This challenge was created to help chronically fabulous patients realize there is so much more to their lives than the negative aspects we so often dwell upon. **We all have a choice each and every day.** There are negatives and there are positives - it's our own choice to decide which aspects get our attention.

In yoga, there are many times where I'll be holding a pose and it will cause intense discomfort because my muscles are working super hard. In that instance, I'll shift my thoughts to my other leg, or another part of my body, which isn't being worked as hard. By switching my perspective, I can often hold the pose longer than I would have if I had been dwelling on the toughness of the posture.

I like to apply this principle in my everyday life as well. When I start to become bogged down by fear or pain, I shift my perspective to something more positive. I'll begin to make a list of all the things I'm grateful for in that moment. By realizing how blessed I am, it truly starts to put things into perspective. Sure, maybe I don't have a ton of energy to do everything I wanted to do, but guess what? I did get out of bed and did x, y and z! It's all about perspective and it truly is up to you what you focus your attention on. Shifting our mindset from one that focuses on the negatives and challenges, to one that focuses on the positives and lessons, can take time. BUT, when you put in the work to make that shift, you will see big changes.

**“When you change the way you look at things,
the things you look at change.” - Wayne Dyer**

I heard a great example of this the other day when I was working through a meditation pack on [Headspace](#) (my favorite meditation app, by the way!). Andy, the founder of Headspace, gave a perfect example. Imagine you walk down the same street everyday and each day you fall into a hole. Overtime, you may start to look ahead of where you're walking to see the hole before you fall in it. Sometimes you may miss it and still fall in, but over time you learn where the hole is and learn how to go around it.

And the same goes for your mind and thoughts. If you start to become more mindful about your thoughts, and start to shift your mind to focus on the positives in your life, you'll start to identify with those instances a lot easier than before. Identifying the things to be grateful for, and to be appreciative of, will help you continue to shift that perspective.

Don't be upset that you can't do X, Y, and Z. Be excited and appreciative that you can do A, B and C. Each day what you're grateful for may change, but it can really help to put your situation into perspective. By living in the present moment, and appreciating what you do have, you'll begin to find solace and happiness in everyday moments.

I created the chronically grateful instagram challenge to help push patients to start to shift their thinking. By posting a challenge question each day, I wanted to challenge my beautiful patient community to start shifting from focusing on pain, fatigue, and other negative aspects, to a focus full of thankfulness and gratefulness. There are so many people in our lives we should be appreciative for, there are situations where we should give praise and thanks, and there are always silver linings to identify within the grey, gloomy skies.



There is SO much research out there showing that helping to shift your perspective can not only make you happier, but actually has a physiological affect on your genes! You can help change your body at its cellular level by just completing this challenge. It's science!

The idea started, and was initially executed, as an instagram challenge. Each day, during the month of November 2015, myself and 5 other amazing individuals posted the challenge questions on instagram. And it took off like wildfire!! We had a wonderful response! [Check out the original blog post here.](#)

I truly believe that the questions that we asked helped others think through aspects of their condition that they might often overlook. The response was overwhelmingly positive and we had so many wonderful people participate. Once the challenge was over, others who had missed the challenge wanted to participate! That's where the idea to turn it into an eBook came in. This eBook will walk you through each of the daily challenge questions and allow you to complete the challenge at your own pace, on your own time. It's meant to be completed within 30 days, but there are no rules! Take as much time as you need to complete each day.



HOW TO COMPLETE THE CHALLENGE

So, how do you complete the challenge?

- 1) Get a journal or notebook that you'll use to complete the exercises. Maybe you'll use your current journal or perhaps you find a super cute one in the \$1 bin of Target! Whatever you use, make sure you have something to document your journey. This challenge can be completed several times a year as your answers will ebb and flow with the seasons of your life. It can be fun to look over your old answers, to see how far you've come, or to identify thought patterns that you may have.
- 2) Create a routine or ritual for completing the challenge. Maybe you'll decide to complete each question at the beginning of your day or perhaps you'd like to end your day on a grateful note! There's no right time to complete the challenge – do what works best for your schedule. If you create a ritual for completing the challenge questions, you may see a shift in energy while you're executing each challenge. Whenever we create an environment which is conducive to thought, or create a space where we feel "safe", many emotions and feelings begin to pour in and over us. I personally have completed the challenge with a cup of lemon balm tea, next to a lit candle, in my meditation space. It allows me a place to completely relax, let go, and to be with my thoughts.
- 3) Before you start the daily challenges, answer the "Before You Begin" questions. It may seem silly, but don't skip these! It's important to get a clear picture of where you're at and where you want to go. You'll revisit these questions after the 30 days and it'll be fun to be able to read and see how your thoughts and emotions may change.
- 4) Follow along with each daily challenge question. Each day there is an image, which poses a question. After reading the question, write your thoughts in your journal. This can be done however you'd like. Use the questions posed each day as a jumping off point to explore the subject. Don't feel bound to only answering the specific question or exercise that is written within each day. They're meant to spark thought and discussion in your head. This is your time to "feel all the feels" and really explore the subjects that are brought up.
- 5) Get ready to see a mental shift! Once you've completed the 30 days, you'll revisit the same questions that you did prior to embarking on the journey. Take the time to explore how you feel and compare it to your thoughts prior to the 30 days. I guarantee you'll notice a change in your thinking and how you feel!

Just because you weren't able to participate in the original challenge, doesn't mean you can't post on Instagram your progress! If you'd like to share your journey with our community, make sure to use the hashtag #ChronicallyGrateful and feel free to tag the hosts (listed at the end of the ebook) in your post. We'd LOVE to see and follow along on your journey!

Use this month to help shift your mentality, to explore the experiences that you've battled and work through emotions that you may have pent up that you don't even realize. Just because you have a diagnosis doesn't mean you can't live an absolutely wonderful life! My hope for you is to live your best life possible. And, if you don't believe that's possible, at least by the end of this month you'll have caught a glimpse of hope! This month you'll get some tools and tricks to put in your back pocket to help propel you forward.

Let's all add the term chronically grateful after our chronically fabulous diagnosis!



BEFORE YOU START

Getting REAL with our thoughts and emotions is the first step we must embark on in order to help wrangle them in. If we can create a clear picture of what we think, why we think it and how we want to change it, we can have a better sense of the mission we're about to embark on.

Before you start the challenge, take a moment to reflect on your current state by answering the following questions. Whenever thinking through these questions, allow whatever emotions or thoughts you may have to come up.

Challenge yourself to think out of the box and REALLY explore these thoughts.

There are no right or wrong answers, so have fun with it and let's get started!

Pre-Challenge Questions

Do you believe that having a positive outlook can affect how you feel?

Why do you believe you feel that way?

When faced with a tough situation, how do you usually approach it?

Is it usually positive or negative?

What made you want to embark on this chronically grateful challenge?

What are you hoping to achieve?

When it comes to healing, do you believe you can take steps on your own to heal yourself?

Why or why not?

If you were only allowed to be grateful for ONE thing, what would it be?

Why would it be this one thing? Why did you choose it?

DAILY CHALLENGES

**Day 1: What does gratefulness mean to you?**

Each one of us may have a completely different perception of what gratefulness is.

What does it mean to YOU?

The dictionary defines gratefulness as “Appreciative of benefits received; thankful; expressing gratitude; affording pleasure or comfort; agreeable.”

When you think about gratefulness, what comes to mind? How do you feel? Are there any events, people or things that pop into your head right off the bat? Take day 1 to explore your relationship to the word gratefulness.

**Day 2: What are you most grateful for on your healthcare team?**

Support comes from many places. We're quick to forget to thank our healthcare teams and they're an extremely integral part of our support system! A wonderful way to help you express your gratefulness for someone is to write a letter. Even if you have no intentions of sending the letter, putting your thoughts into words can be extremely powerful.

Sit down and write a letter to someone who has exerted a positive influence in your life, but whom you have not properly thanked. This can be a nurse, a doctor, a chiropractor, a social worker or anyone else who has helped you in some way. The letter doesn't have to be long, but make sure that you're specific about what the person did and how it affected you. You can decide whether to give this person the letter or to keep it locked up tight in your journal. You can even use this exercise in the future to help explore your support system and to help give you perspective on tough days.

**Day 3: Describe a hard situation you've overcome, which you're now grateful for?**

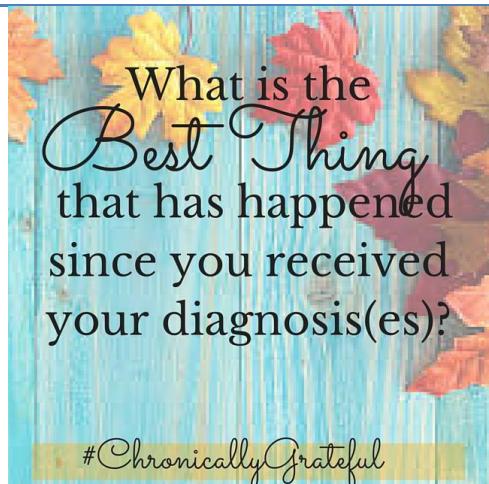
Take a moment and reflect on a hard situation you've encountered in your life. It could be a specific event or situation, a surgery or procedure, a fight you had – anything!

Grab a sheet of paper and draw a 2-column table.

On the left side of the table, write down the hardest parts of that journey and note how, in that moment, they made you feel.

On the right side of the table, write one positive that has transpired from that hard moment.

It may take you some time to identify the positive parts of each negative obstacle, but there are ALWAYS positives to identify. I love to use this exercise when I'm particularly dealing with something “heavy”. It helps me start to see the good when my mind may be dwelling on the bad.



Day 4: What is the best thing that has happened since you received your diagnosis(es)?

This question may be a toughie. You may not be used to looking at your condition as a good thing. But, I promise you, if you dig deep enough, you can find something positive in ANYTHING.

If you're having trouble coming up with something, repeat a similar exercise to yesterdays. It may be helpful to first identify the hardest moments you've had to ensure so far in your journey and then translate that into a positive.

For instance, I truly believe that me falling ill, and having to go out on disability, was one of the biggest blessings I've ever received. Why? Because of that, I started my blog, became active in patient foundations, started speaking on behalf of patients, went back to school to become certified in holistic health and truly started down a whole new career path. A career path in which I'm SO excited about, SO passionate about, and SO motivated for. Because of my struggle, I found my strength, which has helped propel me forward.



Day 5: Who on your family support team are you most grateful for?

Family can be however you define it. Maybe it's biological, maybe it's chosen. However "family" resonates for you, think about how they've been there for you.

In the traditional sense, we may think it's our family's responsibility to help take care of us. But that's so not true. There truly is no one who is *required* to take care of us. So it's essential we make sure to give thanks and appreciation to those who go out of their way to help us.

Take a moment today and let your supportive family know how much they've affected your health care journey and how grateful you are for them.

Support should never, ever be taken for granted.

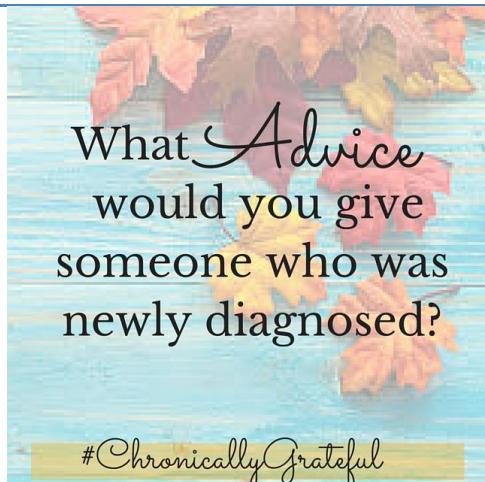


Day 6: What is the best advice someone has given you about living the Chronic Life?

I often hear people on social media complaining about bad advice they've received from others. Miracle creams, snake oils and "cure all" advice seem all to often to be given, but let's embrace the BEST advice you've received!

Who gave you this advice? How did receiving this advice impact you? What did you do with this advice? Have you passed this advice on?

I think the best advice I've ever received, was to seek out the support of other patients. By hearing others stories, connecting with them, and building relationships with others who completely knew what I was going through, I was able to start living a more hopeful existence.



Day 7: What advice would you give someone who was newly diagnosed?

We are experts in our own health.

Doctors, and other health care practitioners, are SO knowledgeable, but let's be honest. . . The only way to TRULY understand something is to experience it. So, using your experience for greater good, what is something you'd tell a newly diagnosed person? What do you wish someone would have told you when you were first diagnosed?

I love HealthCentral because they're AWESOME at storytelling. They showcase patient's journeys and highlight advice they'd share with others. Today, take a few moments and check out some of the patient stories and the advice they'd share. [Be inspired to share your own!](#)



Day 8: Who are you most grateful to have on your friend/ePatient support team?

Friends can truly become just as important as our family. I mentioned before, family can either be biological or chosen, and sometimes our chosen family can end up being SUPER influential and important in our lives. Who are you so grateful to have on your support team? How has this person impacted you? If you could tell them how much they mean to you, what would you say?

Once you've explored your feelings, reach out to this friend and let them know how much they mean to you. Let them know how it makes you feel when you can rely on them. Perhaps even share your appreciation for this friend by doing something for them to show how much they mean to you! And remember to be there for them just as they are for you - friendship is a 2 way street.

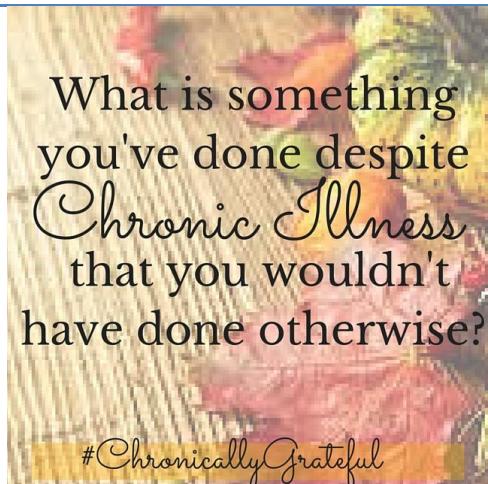


Day 9: What are you most grateful for about yourself?

It may be difficult for you to look yourself in the mirror and focus on the things you LIKE about yourself. So often we look in the mirror and think of the negatives. It's IMPERATIVE that we change the way we think about ourselves. Did you realize that your body hears everything your mind thinks. I always give the example of working of an ungrateful, unsupportive, rude boss. Would you be willing to go out of your way to help them and try your best? More often than not, people say no. But, on the flip side - if you had a boss who was extremely supportive, loving and caring, you'd want to do your best for them. Right?

Think of your body the same way. By showering your body will love, support and kindness, your body will be more apt to give it's all. Whenever you're feeling sad, depressed or having a bad day, take a moment and try to turn your perspective around. Despite obstacles there are always things to be grateful for.

So, today, think about what you're grateful for when it comes to yourself. Maybe you're grateful for your resilience to bounce back after a bad flare, or your strength to keep going and never give up or your compassion and support for others. There are SO SO SO many amazing things about you, today give praise for those attributes.



Day 10: What is something you've done despite chronic illness that you wouldn't have one otherwise?

It's SO easy to dwell on the things we CAN'T do anymore, but there are so many things that we CAN do despite ANY condition. Before I was on disability, I lived a go-go-go life style. I was an IT consultant and traveled every week, building and integrating computer systems, I had a high stress, high-pressure job. And I loved it! But, once I got sick, I started living a MUCH more sedentary lifestyle. It bothered me for the longest time, but now I can look back and identify so many opportunities I wouldn't have had, had I continued to work.

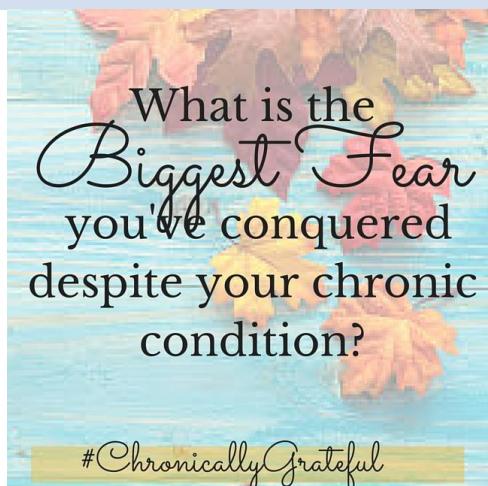
Think through the last few years of your journey and identify something you would have never done otherwise. Maybe it was starting an online store to sell your creative masterpieces, writing a blog to share your journey, embarking on a new hobby or perhaps you met an influential new friend that has helped change your perspective. Whatever it is, celebrate your achievements and ability to do these things!



Day 11: What is the most humbling experience you've had with your chronic illness?

As a society, we tend to take things for granted. Whether it's a person, place, thing or action - it's easy to fall into a pattern of not being grateful. We're all human, we all do it. I spent 6 months not being able to put any weight on my left leg and 3.5 years on crutches. Walking, or rather crutching, would drain all of my energy because my weight and core had to do all the work. My steps seemed like Mt. Everest, leaving my house was comparable to running a marathon and having to go to the mall or grocery shopping was basically torture. Before my disability leave, walking about the store was never a second thought, and now I would tear up at the thought of having to do it.

There are so many things we take for granted that aren't realized until they're taken away from us. What is one experience you've overcome that showed you you can't do it alone or that has made you become more appreciative of? Every time I walk up the steps now, I'm screaming THANK YOU in the back of my mind. The notion that my mobility could be taken away from me at any moment will never be lost on me again.



Day 12: What is the biggest fear you've conquered despite your chronic condition?

Fear is anything that draws you away from being your true, authentic self. Maybe you were afraid of taking a new drug, leaving your old life behind, embracing the unknown future, moving into a new place, having to deal with unsupportive friends - there are a number of fears that we encounter everyday.

Explore one of the fears you've had and how you've overcome it! What made you fearful? Why did it make you fearful? How did it make you feel? How did you feel when you overcome it?

We can very easily retreat and wallow in fear, but today, let's celebrate a time we've overcome our fear!

**Day 13: How has your chronic condition affected your compassion and empathy for others?**

We learn empathy and strength from obstacles we overcome in our life.

Think back to a time where you showed compassion and empathy for another. Do you think your own health journey influenced how you acted? Were you more understanding and patient because you'd been there fore? Have you experienced a similar experience and felt unsupported, therefore maybe you stood up and helped someone else going through it too?

One area I've found a chronically fabulous person benefit from is in this area. We're able to relate to others easier, we're able to understand what they're going through and often we're willing to help them in ways we wished someone would have helped us.

**Day 14: What is the most helpful thing someone on your healthcare team has done for you?**

Support comes from so many places in our life - especially from our health care practitioners. There really are some amazing doctors, nurses, office staff, chiropractors, acupuncturists, physical therapists, masseuses (... you get the idea), out there!

Back in the first week, we thought about who we were thankful for on our healthcare team and I'd like to go back to that subsection of our support team. We focused on the person before, but this time let's focus on a specific event, action or nugget of advice that has been given.

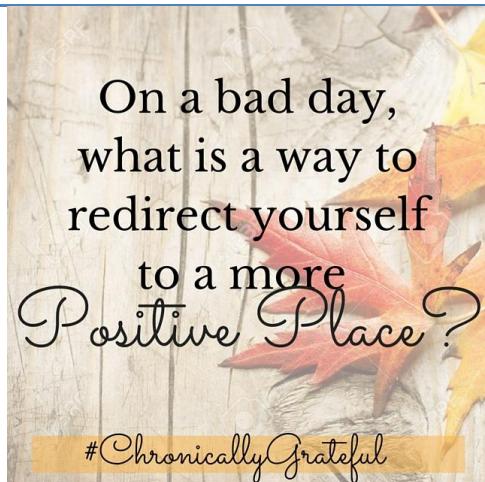
What is the most helpful advice/action/support you've received from one of them? How have you benefited from it and how have you used it to further your health?

**Day 15: When dealing with your chronic condition, what is a product or service you're grateful for?**

There are so many different gadgets, tools and products out there that help chronically fabulous patients. I've even created a whole page on my blog dedicated to my favorite products!

Maybe you love your deep blue rub that you use on all your joints, perhaps you're so grateful for your netflix account that helps force you to sit and rest when you need it, or maybe you love a specific book that helped change your perspective of your situation.

Material things aren't everything, but they can help assist in helping live life a little more comfortably. Let's give thanks and appreciation for the products or services that help us live our lives a bit easier!

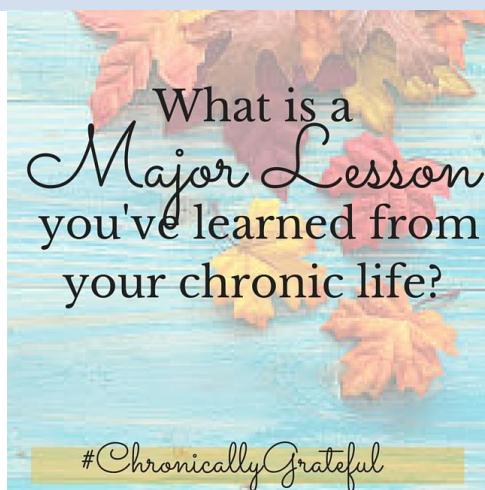
**Day 16: On a bad day, what is a way to redirect yourself to a more positive place?**

Is there a certain song that makes you happy or perhaps looking at a specific picture can put you in a completely different mood?

If you don't have a go to strategy, make a list of things that make you smile! When we're in the heat of the moment, many times our caution goes with the wind. Having a list that you can pull out and use can be extremely beneficial.

What is my list? 1. Listen to Celine Dion (hey, I love her ok!) 2. Call my Grandma 3. Turn to my Spoonie fam on social media 4. Try a new recipe

Then, when you're having a bad day, you can pull out your list and do something on it. If you're creating a list, write today's post highlighting a few of these activities that make you smile :)

**Day 17: What is a major lesson you've learned from your chronic life?**

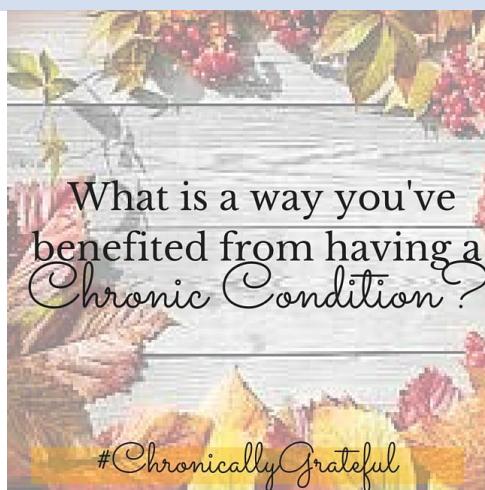
In life, everything we encounter teaches us something.

EVERYTHING.

Maybe it's to be more empathetic, or perhaps it's to be more patient. Maybe it's to help us realize our strength or courage. Or perhaps it's to help propel us further into our future.

Whatever it is that we encounter, we can use these lessons to help us grow.

What is a lesson you've learned from your chronic condition? How have you applied it and let it help you for the better? How has it made you feel?

**Day 18: What is a way you've benefited from having a chronic condition?**

You don't usually hear the word "benefit" coupled with "chronic condition", but guess what! I bet you've received added benefits because of your situation.

Take a moment and think through the last few years of your life.

Can you identify a situation - maybe an activity, meeting someone, reading a certain book, taking a certain trip - that wouldn't have happened otherwise? It may take you some time to identify these benefits, but they're there.

Always be looking for them!

For me, I think about how my psoriatic arthritis diagnosis has brought a whole new family into my life. One who helps support me through my good and bad days and one I'm SO extremely grateful for to have in my life. I've met them through work I've done through the National Psoriasis Foundation and I never would have met them had it not been for my PsA.

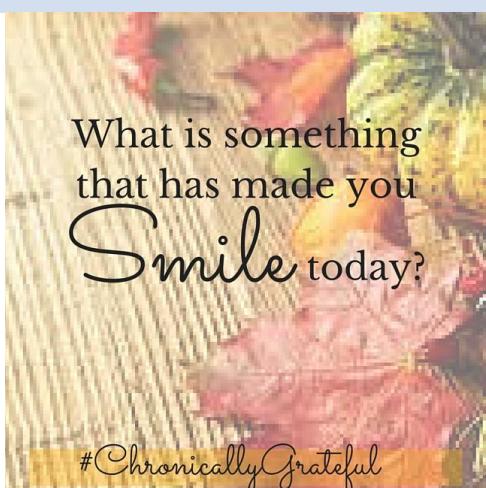


Day 19: What is the most courageous act you've completed despite your chronic condition?

In life, we have a choice in how we approach fear. We can either choose to let fear hold us back or we can harness fear, accept it and embrace love instead.

Having a chronic condition can bring up A LOT of fears. Fears of going places, fears of meeting new people, fears of public speaking or having to speak about your condition, fears of wearing long sleeves when you're flaring, fears of having a flare when you least expect it. There are so many fears that run rampant through our brains every day!

What is one thing you've done, despite all these fears? How have you not allowed your condition to hold you back? How did you feel when you overcame this fear and showed fear whose boss?

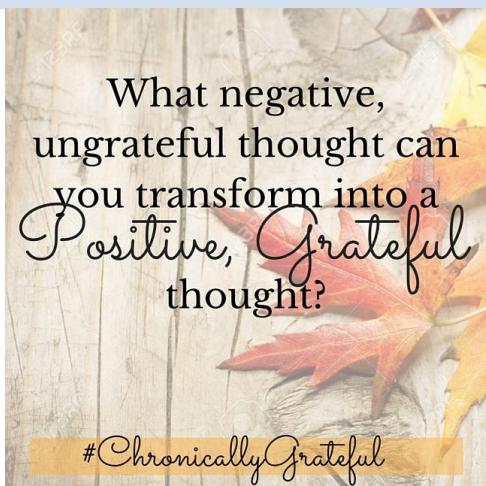


Day 20: What is something that has made you smile today?

There is beauty all around us. There's beauty in nature, there's beauty in our bodies and there's a certain beauty in just getting out of bed in the morning. Taking time to reflect on the beauty in your life and the things that make you smile can help put things into perspective.

What is something that has made you smile today? Was it a cute baby you passed? Was it a gorgeous day outside? Did you read your favorite book or maybe saw a funny movie? Perhaps a good friend called you - or you called a good friend.

Whatever it was, take a moment to honor it and let it make your smile grow even bigger!!!

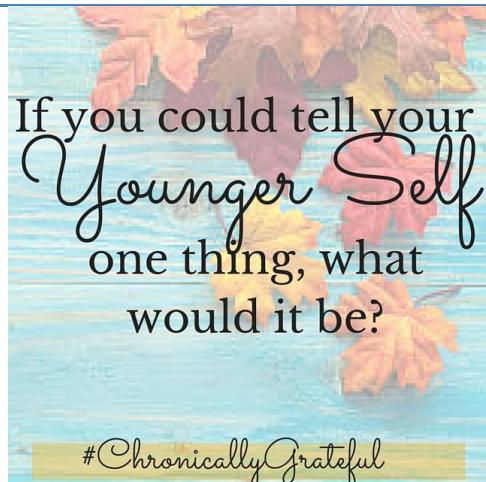


Day 21: What negative, ungrateful thought can you transform into a positive, grateful thought?

We all have ungrateful, negative thoughts. Even the people who seem the most positive. It's just human nature to be that way! Being able to identify and acknowledge these thoughts is truly the first step in transforming our lives. We can then take these thoughts and shift our perceptions to one of a more positive stance. Today, acknowledge one ungrateful thought you've had. Maybe you lost your patience at the doctor's office, perhaps you lashed out at a friend, maybe you had rude thoughts of someone walking down the street or maybe you had some negative thoughts about yourself and your condition. Whatever it was, pick one of them and decide to transform the thought into a more loving, grateful one.

For example, Ungrateful Thought: My doctor's office is absolutely ridiculous for taking so long to get my new prescription to me. HELLO!? Don't they realize I'm in pain and suffering here?

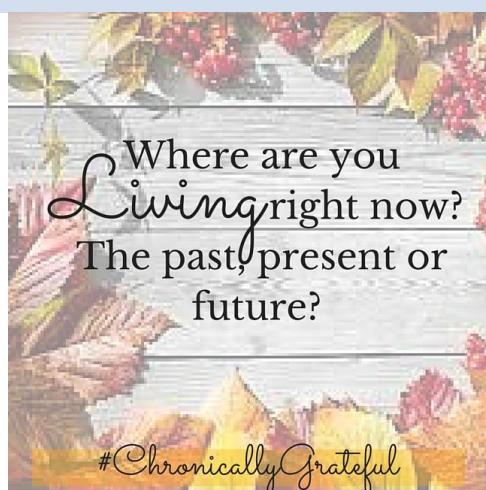
Grateful Thought: I'm so grateful for my doctor and his staff. Without them, I wouldn't be able to get medications that help control my pain and help manage my symptoms. I know they're under so much stress from a million different parties and I know they'll get to me in the right time.

**Day 22: If you could tell your younger self one thing, what would it be?**

The view is always 20/20 in hindsight, isn't it? All those sleepless nights or arguments that arose from frustration of not knowing how the future was going to turn out. We learn so much as we go on living our lives.

If you were able to speak to your younger self, what would you tell them? What bright insights would you give them now having lived your life? How would you have approached things differently? Or what would you totally do again?

I had the opportunity to work on a fun project for psoriatic arthritis patients through HealthCentral. They filmed short videos giving their younger selves advice. If you need some inspiration, [check out these Memo To Me videos!](#)

**Day 23: Where are you living right now? The past, present or future?**

Change. It's inevitable and it's the only constant in our lives. We can plan, plan, plan, but doesn't it always seem that in the midst of all of our grand plans, life will throw us a curveball? It's not to say we shouldn't prepare and be ready for the future, but living in the here and now is the best way to help us stay sane. It can be a very difficult task to stay in the here and now! Our culture is constantly bringing up things from our past or pushing us to have the perfect future. We dwell on the things we used to be able to do and get upset because we still can't do them. Or we worry ourselves sick about what's going to happen in the future. So where do you live? The past, the present or the future? Why do you think you do this?

A simple technique that we can use to help us stay in the here and now is to create gratitude triggers. Place an object somewhere in your house, or workspace, which will remind you to feel grateful each time that you look at it. It can be a little sign that says "Thank You" hanging in front of your desk, or a doormat with the word "Welcome" written on it to remind you to be grateful each time that you arrive at home. Whenever you see this item, let it be a visual reminder for you to stop what you're doing, take a deep breath and say thank you for what you have in this very moment.

**Day 24: How can you change someone's life for the better today?**

Giving of ourselves is beneficial in many different ways. The first being that we can impact the day of someone we love (or maybe someone we don't even know!). And second, this act usually makes us feel happy and can put a smile on our face!

What is something that you can do to help someone in your life today? Maybe it's a simple phone call or text. Maybe you have a ton of spoons today and you want to make an extra special dinner for your family. At the very least, make sure to smile at the next person you see! A smile can change someone's whole day!!!

**Day 25: Who inspires you the most?**

Each of us has people who inspire us to be better than we were yesterday. These people can really help us on our path to becoming the best version of ourselves that we can be.

Take a look at all the amazing people in your life and think about who inspires you the most. Why does this person inspire you? What traits or attributes does this person exude that really touches you? What do they do that makes you so grateful to have them in your life? How does this person make you feel?

After you've worked through your thoughts and emotions on this person, make sure to take a moment today to say a big THANK YOU to this beautiful soul.

**Day 26: Today is about saying thanks!**

There are many different ways people can make an impact in our lives. Today is all about giving back to those people and saying thank you.

Today, make it a point to tell 3 people in your life THANK YOU. Select 3 people who have made a positive impact on your life and tell them how they've touched you! Call them, text them, write a super loving facebook post, tag them on instagram – whatever you do, make sure you let them know how you feel.

Today is about spreading the love and thanks!

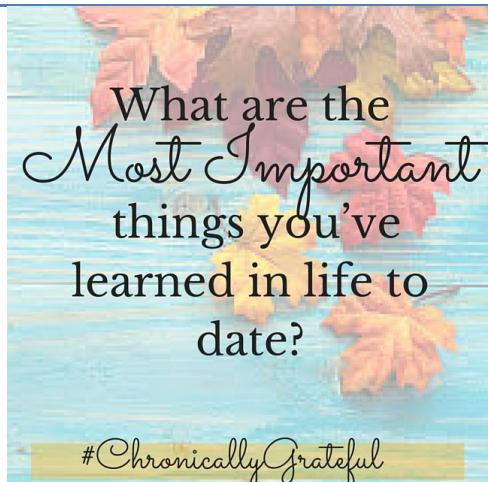
**Day 27: How can you love yourself more today?**

Taking care of ourselves is so vitally important. Especially when we're living the #chronicLife.

What is a way that you can love yourself more today? Maybe you'll take a play from Louise Hay and focus on doing some mirror work. Mirror work can be EXTREMELY powerful. How do you do it? Stand in front of a mirror and stare at your reflection. Repeat, out loud, "I love you!" while looking yourself straight in the eye. It can be very intimidating and uncomfortable at first, but by affirming out loud that you love yourself, you will start to shift mental patterns.

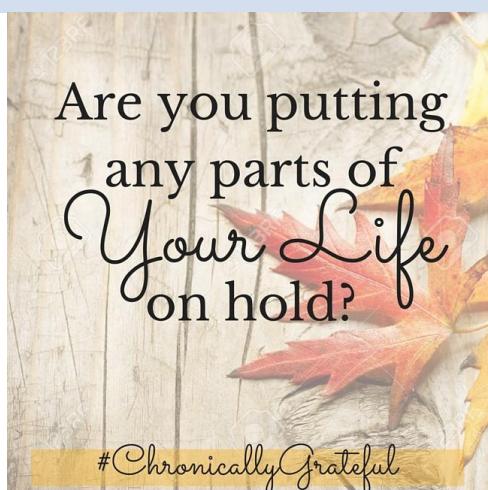
Or perhaps you'll simply take extra care of your body by taking an epsom salt and essential oil bath or make sure to get some meditation or yoga in today.

Whatever it is, how will you love yourself more today?

**Day 28: What are the most important things you've learned in life to date?**

A calm sea never made a skilled sailor. As we go through life, we encounter MANY MANY MANY ups and downs. During those ups and downs, we learn more about ourselves than we ever thought humanly possible. Sometimes it may take us years to realize the lesson, but if we look hard enough we can find it.

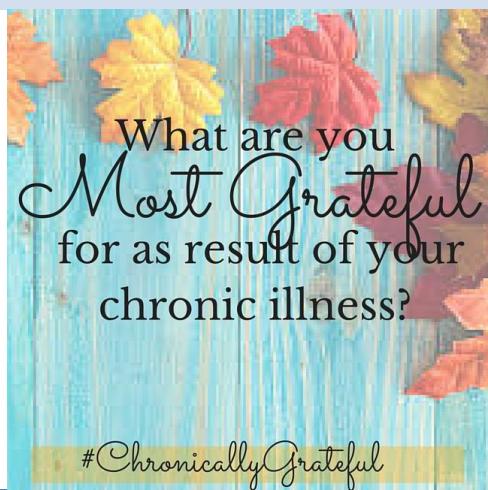
What are the most important lessons you've learned from your chronic illness? How did some of your toughest struggles shape you into the person you are today? Looking back on your darkest moments, what helped bring you back to the light? There are so many ways this exercise can go for you. Take time to really explore this question today in your journal. Pour out your emotions, wade through your thoughts, feel all the feels.

**Day 29: Are you putting any parts of your life on hold?**

With a diagnosis can come limitations of things we used to enjoy doing. Maybe we can't run like we used to, perhaps we need to pace ourselves more or it might be that we are unable to work at the job we used to.

No matter what our diagnosis is, we shouldn't give it power to hold us back from the things we want to do. There are always workarounds! So what if you can't walk around an amusement park like you used to. Get someone to push you in a wheelchair so you can still enjoy yourself and save your strength and energy! It's easy to get upset about the things we can't do, but there's always something that we CAN be doing. I've found that the redirects I've experienced in my life have always worked out for the better.

Today, think about your life and identify an area where you're allowing your diagnosis to hold you back. Why are you allowing this? What would it mean to you if you could break through the barrier you've set up and participate in this area of your life? Then, once you've identified it, decide on one action you can take this week to help move you closer to knocking that wall down. Just because you're living the #chroniclife doesn't mean you can't have a fabulous life! Be the architect of your own life and blow your own damn mind!

**Day 30: What are you most grateful for as result of your chronic illness?**

This month we've explored many different things, but here's the granddaddy of all the #chronicallygrateful questions. As a result of your chronic condition, what are you most grateful for? Is it your support team? Maybe it's a newfound passion or path in life. It might be new opportunities that you wouldn't have had before or new friends you never would have met. Whatever it is, take this opportunity today to shout it out loud!

Through this challenge I hope you've been able to start connecting more easily with positive thoughts than negative. Use some of the exercises we've completed so far to complete this challenge if you're stuck. Make a list of your tough moments and write a grateful thought for each or write a letter to your chronic illness thanking it for something it's brought into your life. There's no right or wrong way to express gratefulness. However you explore it, make sure to make it the focus of your day today. Sing your gratefulness from the rooftops!



BEFORE YOU END

Change does NOT happen over night. #RealTalk

Seriously. Whenever we want something to change, we can't expect it to be completely different right off the bat. And let's be honest, 30 days in the grand scheme of life is **NOTHING!** It's a drop in the bucket.

If we've been dwelling on the negatives for years, how can we expect that one simple 30 day challenge will change our thought process completely? We can't. And that's the truth.

BUT, change occurs over time. And slowly, but surely, we can have a huge impact on our thoughts and our lives. You may have already begun to see huge shifts in your mindset or perhaps you've only noticed small glimpse of a shift. Both are perfectly perfect. Each of us are so different, in different places and in different mindsets. No two individuals, completing this challenge, will see the same end result. And that's ok! So honor where you are, honor where you've come from, and honor where you're going.

So, think back to the pre-challenge questions you answered before starting day 1.

Let's see if any of your thoughts have changed! And if they haven't, see if you can explore why that may be? Is something still holding you back?

Regardless of how much, or how little, you've shifted, CELEBRATE the progress that you've made thus far. If you're not progressing, you're not living!

Post-Challenge Questions

Do you believe that having a positive outlook can affect how you feel?

Do you feel that you have a different opinion of this question having completed this 30 day challenge?

When faced with a tough situation, how do you usually approach it?

Are there any tools or tips that you've gained over this past month that can help you in the future?

What made you want to embark on this chronically grateful challenge?

Having completed the challenge now, how do you feel? Did you accomplish what you set out to complete?

When it comes to healing, do you believe you can take steps on your own to heal yourself?

Has your views changed at all over the past month?

If you were only allowed to be grateful for ONE thing, what would it be?

Why would it be this one thing? Why did you choose it?



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations

for making it through this amazingly grateful challenge!

I'm SO very proud of you for embarking on this journey! I hope you've been able to explore areas of your life that maybe you haven't thought about often and have begun to appreciate them more. Hopefully the exercises you've completed this month have allowed you to begin to shift your perceptions to more positive ones.

It's not an easy task.

It definitely takes time, patience and lots and lots of practice!

Be patient with yourself. Miracles do happen, but it can take a while for our human brains to change their ways. If you're committed to making a change, if you're putting yourself first, and if you're devoted to focusing on the positives, the change will occur. It most definitely, absolutely, 100% will.

I love seeing the transformation that people have when they shift their perceptions to a more grateful one. Each of us may need different supports to get us there, and that's completely ok! We're all living out unique journeys, so we need to draw on resources which speak to us.

I'd like to leave you with some go to resources I usually suggest to others. This is by NO MEANS an absolute list. This is just one drop in the infinite bucket of amazing wisdom that our world holds. Use this list as a platform to start looking for other resources. If you find one that really helps you, share it with the world! Tweet it, facebook it, instagram it – whatever you do, share it!!! (and tag me in it!)

Resources:

Books

- [May Cause Miracles, Gabrielle Bernstein](#)
- [Miracles Now, Gabrielle Bernstein](#)
- [The Desire Map, Danielle LaPorte](#)
- [The Happiness Advantage, Shawn Achor](#)
- [The Happiness Project, Gretchen Rubin](#)
- [Mind Over Medicine, Dr. Lissa Rankin](#)
- [The Fear Cure, Dr. Lissa Rankin](#)
- [E-Squared, Pam Grout](#)
- [Super Better](#)
- [Super Genes](#)

Websites

- [Happify](#)
- [Lululemon's Fuel Happiness](#)
- [Gabrielle Bernstein](#)
- [Danielle LaPorte](#)
- [HealthCentral](#)
- [Pixel Thoughts](#)

Apps

- [Headspace](#)
- [Buddhify](#)
- [Calm](#)
- [Insight Timer](#)
- [WelzenW](#)
- [Super Better](#)
- [Spirit Junkie](#)
- [Miracles Now](#)
- [Conversation Starters: A Desire Map App](#)
- [#Truthbomb](#)

Other

- [Truthbomb Decks](#)
- [Miracles Now: Inspirational Affirmations & Life Changing Tools](#)
- [Crazy Sexy Love Notes: A 52 Card Deck](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following wonderful individuals helped me host the #ChronicallyGrateful instagram challenge in November 2015. Without them, it wouldn't have been possible or the great success that it was!



Aimee

Instagram: [@fitaimee_ra](#)

Blog: [Stronger Than RA](#)

Aimee is a Rheum athlete who strives to live an active life. She is such a positive source of motivation and health. Aimee shows other patients that by modifying exercises, eating healthy and approaching your health in a holistic way, you really can thrive.



Alan

Instagram: [@abrewington](#)

Blog: [Pain Talks](#)

Alan is an ePatient Advocate I had the pleasure of meeting on Twitter. He's making a difference in this life by using his own patients story to help current and future patients. He is an advisor at Stanford Medicine X and is always good for some social media support what you're having a bad day.



Ashley

Instagram: [@ambshuck](#)

Blog: [Arthritis Ashley](#)

Ashley is a writer and an amazing advocate for rheumatoid arthritis, celiac disease, lupus, among many other causes. Ashley is a great source of inspiration and is awesome at facilitating discussions between patients to share ideas, share stories and share experiences.



Gwendolyn

Instagram: [@life_love_and_lavendar_blog](#)

Blog: [Gwendolyn Fiola](#)

Gwendolyn is a beautiful soul. Her inspirational posts on Instagram help lift everyone up and help to show that love can truly survive anything! She's so real and down to earth – someone you definitely want on your support team!



Jessica

Instagram: [@jessicaGimeno](#)

Blog: [Fashionably Ill](#)

Jessica makes chronic illness look pretty damn good. By sharing her personal struggles with bipolar II, polycystic ovarian syndrome, asthma, psoriasis, and the neuromuscular autoimmune disease Myasthenia Gravis, she's created an environment where people feel accepted and supported.



Julie

Instagram: [@itsjustabaddaynotlife](#)

Blog: [It's Just A Bad Day, NOT Life](#)

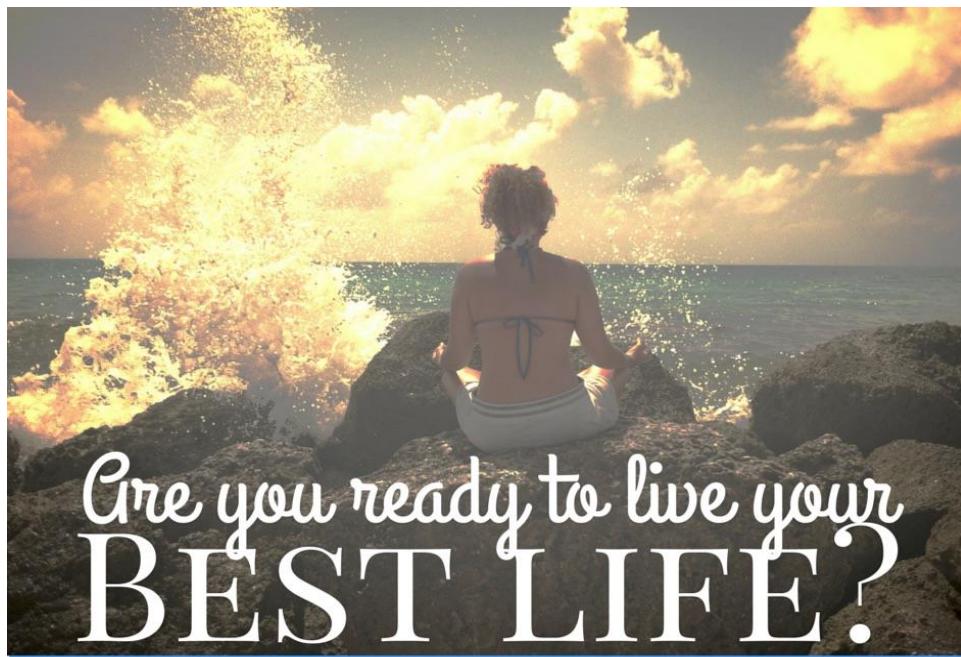
Julie believes that having to be sent out on disability from work was the biggest blessing she's ever received. Thriving with psoriatic arthritis and avascular necrosis, Julie has battled CRPS, depression, anxiety and melanoma as well. She loves to use instagram as a way to inspire and motivate the patient population.



Julie Cerrone is an [American Association of Drugless Practitioners Certified Holistic Health Coach](#), ePatient Advocate, doTerra Wellness Advocate, yoga instructor, speaker and spoonie blogger thriving with psoriatic arthritis, avascular necrosis of the femur, complex regional pain syndrome and has battled melanoma, depression and anxiety. Using her personal mantra ‘it’s just a bad day, not a bad life’, she started [itsjustabadday.com](#), which was named one of the top 5 psoriatic arthritis blogs by EverydayHealth.com. Staying busy is a way of life for Julie. Some of her accomplishments and activities include: 2014 Stanford Medicine X ePatient Scholar, current mentor and blogger for the National Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Foundation, current member of the Advocacy and Mission Committee for Arthritis Foundation, active participant in WEGO Health projects and was named Best In Show: Twitter in the 2015 Health Activist Awards, passionate member of the IRT Digital Activist Team, excited member of the Intake.Me Patient Advisory Board, and certified instructor of nutrition, wellness and yoga classes around Pittsburgh, PA.

Connect With Me!

Blog: [Itsjustabadday.com](#)
Health Coaching: [Juliecerrone.com](#)
Twitter: [twitter.com/justagoodlife](#)
Facebook: [Facebook.com/itsjustabaddaynotlife](#)
Instagram: [Instagram.com/itsjustabaddaynotlife](#)
Email: justabaddaynotlife@gmail.com



Contact me today for a free health history consultation!

Julie Cerrone, Certified Holistic Health Coach | [juliecerrone.com](#) | justabaddaynotlife@gmail.com