

“Life is a Journey”

By: Bronwyn 'Dharana' Lefebvre

Life is a journey. It's one I've come to know that has provided me with unimaginable obstacles that I have, through time and strength, overcome. This battle gave birth to an entity I have come to identify with - I am a warrior, and this is my story.

I remember my childhood quite vividly, replaying certain events that are engraved within my mind, scars that have healed, but have never been forgotten. Countless hospital days became part of a routine, creating an immense amount of anxiety and fear - the constant bad news became expected, yet I was too young to fully understand what was happening to my body. The first hospital visit was one where my parents had rushed me to our children's hospital after a paediatrician had urged my mother that something was wrong with my heart. During the echocardiogram, the nurse had rushed out of the room, grabbing the cardiologist. It was



serious. It was much more than my parents could have ever expected. I was hospitalized and booked for surgery where I was diagnosed with pericarditis, a condition where the sack that holds the heart becomes engulfed with fluid. To this day, I can recall stepping into my hospital room with a nurse awaiting my arrival with an IV stand, which followed with the sharp pain of the needle piercing my skin, the vein unwilling to participate, and the vivid image of blood staining the pillows beside me. This was only the first of many traumatic experiences. Once the fluid had finally subsided, a sense of relief filled the air, but not for long. Two years later, I was diagnosed with Lupus, an auto-immune disease that left doctors with a prognosis that I would not live to reach my twenties. I watched my parents' alarming faces, their baby girl poked, cut, and sewn back together right before their eyes. All I knew at the time was how frightened I was of pain, and as long as I was numbed from experiencing the tip of the needle, then I was comfortable, ignorant of how sick I really was.



For the years to come, Lupus became part of my identity. I was prescribed steroids, and watched my tiny frame swell into an overweight child due to the water buildup of the medication. I was isolated from living a truthful, playful and innocent life. Disease was becoming who I was, and my inner true self was locked away. Thus, I continued to neglect seeing things clearly. I needed to make an effort to stay alive, an effort to mature even at such a young age, an effort to fix my diseased body, an effort to become whole again. I began to join my mother in her yoga practice, moving my body in different positions while unknowingly connecting to my Divine nature, my mind, my soul, my spirit.

Life is never easy, in fact, it's a constant roller coaster that never seems to stop, especially within the Western world. As a result of the mishaps of my life, I turned to yoga, a decision to take on a path of health, hope, and happiness - one where I was fully responsible, one where I could finally become alive with the world around me. During my times of crisis, I turned to a practice that was introduced to me at a young age, while my mother was in the midst of completing her Ashtanga yoga teacher training with David Swenson in Ottawa, Canada. I was 8. At the time, and

little to my knowing, my mother was suffering from an eating disorder that had begun before I was born, secretly suffering from her family, while still projecting an endless amount of love to myself, my brother, and my father. Not only was she dealing with a sick child, whose prognosis was little to none at all, her body and mind were in turmoil. Yoga was an escape, a practice and lifestyle that allowed this beautiful soul to flourish, to escape the turmoil that had imprisoned her spirit for so long. Thus, began my journey, one where we both participated, practicing together in a space that allowed us to become in tune with our true nature. Yoga allowed me to withdraw from pain and suffering, while guiding my soul towards enlightenment.

As time wore, the prevalence of my illness had subsided, I was growing, reaching my teens, prospering with health, and happiness. Lupus had given nothing but bad news for ten



years. Although I was no longer taking medication, and the disease had reached a state of remission, I realized that some scars would never possibly heal. From short term memory loss, to gaining an immense amount of insecurities, it was hard to let go of the past, but I knew I needed to set out and connect with my soul and my True Self.

I was a living miracle, and was now ready to discover myself in the mountains, the Land of Gods, the birthplace of Yoga, a practice that had saved my life. In September 2017, I embarked on my first solo journey to Rishikesh, India to fulfill my dream of completing my yoga teacher training with my guru, Yogrishi Vishveketu. This sacred space was a predominant life altering event that will forever remain in my heart, an experience like no other, a place that released blocked energy, an introduction to my higher spirituality.

I remember sitting in a beautiful cafe overlooking the Himalayas. Their beauty representing how far I've come, the strength and courage of my life's journey. Life is never easy. Obstacles come and go like clouds in the sky. Some are dark, some are dull, and some disappear and let the sun shine bright. I begin to listen and believe in my Divine spirit as it continues to grow each day - I am strong, I am beautiful, I am true, I am whole, I am finally me.

October is Lupus Awareness month. A disease that is mostly unknown to the world, like the wolf who is kept hidden in darkness. I believe part of my path is to educate and guide others to heal their Self, physically, spiritually and mentally. I honour this month as it is a significant reminder of this journey, through the darkness and light.

I am honoured to announce the Divinity bracelet, a collaboration with MalaRae to educate the world on this disease (<http://malarae.com/product/divinity-bracelet/>). Proceeds will be donated to an organization very close and dear to my heart, Lupus Ontario. The Divine light is within us all. We hold the power to protect, to love and to heal. Together, as one, we can overcome the darkest of storms. Join us in making a difference, in tuning into our healing energy.

A gift from me to you - Use my code bronwynl to receive 15% off

Namaste forever and always,
Bronwyn 'Dharana' Lefebvre