

Chronic-ers of Joy



YOUR STORY MATTERS CREATIVELY EXPRESS YOUR STORY

Stories are vital to us as people: who we are as individuals and who we are as a community. **We each have a story to tell.** YOU have a story to tell, and there are many creative ways to tell it and maybe even to share it with others. Some days, it might feel unfair, it might seem like others have it made, that they are the ones with the important stories to tell. BUT everyone's story is unique. **Your story matters.**

Nobody else has had your experiences, your highs and lows, your challenges, your routines, and your successes to celebrate. Nobody else knows what this illness, injury, or difficulty has been like for YOU – the things that have changed, the good and the crummy things you've experienced. However you decide to express your story – in a video, as a poem or a song or a painting, through dance, in a skit, or even as sculpture is awesome!

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Don't worry about "doing it right." Go with the flow of your thoughts. You can edit later.
- Use words that speak to you; they will speak to others too.
- Explain medical words others may not understand.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. You aren't expected to have all the answers.
- Start with a moment or event to write about.
- Use as many details as you need to tell your story.
- Relax! Expressing your story can be just for you – for now.



QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU CREATIVELY EXPRESS YOUR STORY

Use just the questions that spark your thoughts.

- What is your typical day like now?
- Could you describe your illness in 5 words? What do you most want others to understand?
- Are you different today from who you were before your illness? Do other people in your life seem to be different now too?
- What losses have you experienced?
- If you could have one thing back, what would it be? Why?
- Who has been the greatest help? Who has made you laugh or best comforted you?
- Has your walk with God changed? Have you have felt His Presence in a new way? Has it sometimes felt like He just "isn't there"?
- Have you been sad? How have you handled those moments?
- How would you encourage a friend who has chronic illness?
- What unexpected circumstance has become a blessing?
- What things really frustrate you?
- Are there times when you've felt really strong? What helped you feel that way?
- How has God turned your weakness, your struggles, into strengths?
- What is the greatest impact of chronic illness on your life?
- If you could help someone else who is struggling with an illness, an accident, or a huge loss – what would you want to do?
- What character qualities have you gained through pain or illness?
- What does COURAGE look like to you – in yourself, in others?

Once you've creatively expressed your first draft, set it down and go treat yourself in some delightful, little way!

**You have bravely expressed your story,
Courageous Chronic-er,
and that is something to celebrate!**

