

Be Thankful For What You Have

By Rich Patriaco



Chapter 1 - The Saying Is Really True

August 15th 2010, I felt fine I took my daily walks which were 3 miles during the week and 5 miles on weekends. I felt fine and I even dropped 20 lbs, but the next morning I woke up with a swollen leg and by 3 o'clock I was in an emergency room in Hackensack N.J.

They did an ultra sound on me and found 3 blood clots! the one in my leg was called deep vein thrombosis and the other two by both lungs were called pulmonary embolism and as I layed there I thought the saying is really true that a persons life can change overnight.

I had to lay on the table perfectly still from 3 to 9 pm and talk about a lousy feeling, so many times I wanted to scratch my foot and the nurse said no, I asked for water and they said I couldn't have it while the ultra sound was working but she did give me some ice chips and it helped my dry mouth.

So at 9 pm a room was ready and they brought me to it, and on August 16th I layed in my bed and looked out the window and I asked God to let me die! I wanted the clots to go into my lungs and cut off my oxygen. The next morning I woke up and I asked God! Why are you keeping me down here?

I was hooked up to an I.V. and I had a needle in my arm, my hand, heart patches on my chest and a tube in my nose! My doctor asked when was the last time I was in a hospital? I told him in 1973! At that time I had a lump on my upper lip and my parents took me to the doctor and I was given a shot of Penicillin

The next day half my face blew up and I needed surgery, but now I found out the blood clots were hereditary from my mothers side of the family. It didn't matter what age I could have had it even at 53 years old, the doctor told me that it could happen at any age.

I still had my work cut out for me even though the clots by my lungs were gone, but one thing doctors made clear that if I didn't get to the hospital when I did, I would have died through the night.

Chapter 2 - The Long Road

I had my work cut out for me, more so after I refused surgery! The doctor told me that the blood clots would dissolve on their own and the ones in my lungs did while I was in Hackensack, but my leg was worse.

They told me to try and walk and it was brutal on me, I had to walk with a cane and while I was attached to an I.V. and

I took baby steps but after walking to the nurses station I couldn't do it anymore and barely made it back to my room.

It is a very bad feeling to go from athletic to active to an invalid! For almost two weeks I felt like one!

The first week I couldn't go to the bathroom on my own, I couldn't take a shower either I had to rely on a total stranger and this was the the first time in my life I felt like this.

As far as my lungs the doctors asked me if I ever had trouble with them? I told them twice when I had pneumonia and on both occasions I had water in my lungs!

The hospital tested me for everything from A to Z, and much to my surprise the triglycerides were 665 and they are supposed to be 145!

They are fat in the blood and if too high then cholesterol cannot be read, so they put me on medication for that. For the first 3 days I was on morphine because the pain was so bad I wanted to scream and I couldn't but day 4,

I was taken off that and put on Percocet until they released me.

So after 6 days I was being discharged but I still couldn't walk and needed help and I was transferred to a physical rehab center in Paramus N.J.

Chapter 3 - Physical Rehab

When the ambulance pulled up to the rehab, I saw it was also a nursing home! I never felt so defeated in my whole life, in 2009 I went to a gym and stood on a platform with shoulder pads and I set the machine at 500 lbs.

I raised in 25 straight times, and at the end of 2009 I brought my refrigerator down 2 flights of stairs in Saddle Brook N.J. I took the doors off and held the fridge with one hand and the bannister with the other hand and took it down alone.

11 months later I'd be in a nursing home at 53 years of age! It was a Saturday night and it was unlike my previous Saturday nights, more so because less than an hour I heard a woman screaming!

I called the nurse and wanted to know why she was screaming? Only a doctor can have the authority to give medication by force if the patient refuses, more simply put the orderlies had to hold her down while an injection was given.

The next morning I was moved up to the 2nd floor and my room mate was a 90 year old man named Anthony, and the more I looked around the more I wanted to begin my physical therapy.

I was in there for 17 days before being discharged, and the first week I had to sit on a chair to take a shower and I was also taught how to dress myself, very hard thing for an independent person to be subjected too.

As for therapy I had to walk on parallel bars and that wasn't easy because the blood clot was still in my leg, and I also had to wear a compressed stocking. They also taught me how to administer injections in my stomach, with a thing call Lovenox, that is an alternative for regular blood thinners.

So after 17 days I was able to walk again and I was out but had an unhappy surprise waiting for me when I got back home.

Chapter 4 - Bad News

When I got back home I found a letter in my mailbox and I was told I was facing eviction! I lived in my former apartment for almost 10 years, and three months before I got sick one of my former credit cards went into my account and took out over \$500 dollars electronically!

I went to the bank and protested that but it was done electronically and there wasn't anything I could do except borrow money on the internet and that was a HUGE mistake!

I did it from 2 places and every two weeks too much money was being taken out of my checking account and I didn't have enough money to cover my rent, and I was given a choice leave or face eviction so I left.

I was invited to come to Florida for a month and a doctor in Saddle Brook N.J. gave me the okay to leave but not to fly! I was told a train ride would be okay as long as I wore a compressed stocking and took my blood thinners.

Between all stops from Newark N.J. to West Palm Beach Florida took about 27 hours! I was picked up at the train station and was brought to Singer Island Florida which is part of Riviera Beach! One day later I was back in the hospital when my ankle was all swollen.

This time I had no choice I needed surgery, another 6 days in the hospital because I needed 3 leg operations to clean the clot out of my leg and I was also told that I'd have to be on blood thinners the rest of my life too.

It was supposed to be for 18 months but there is too great of a chance of the clots coming back more so when it comes to my lungs and I have been on Warfarin since August of 2010.

Plus I need my blood levels tested every month for the rest of my life because the levels have to be between 2 and 3 and if it's lower than 2 then it's a risk.

Chapter 5 - Facing Disability

I was now faced with disability because my leg has permanent damage! The valves in my leg are dead, there isn't enough blood flowing to the veins and in order to keep the circulation going I have to take daily walks and if I lose

circulation I will be back in a wheelchair and that's OUT! I felt what it was like to be an invalid and it's a bad feeling but there are also set backs. If I travel I have to wear a stocking, I cannot do Yoga, leg presses, no horseback riding, or anything that could put a strain on my leg.

January of 2011 my former job asked me if I was coming back? I told them my leg had permanent damage and I could no longer do the duties I did for almost 18 years either and I stayed in Florida.

I miss making \$500 dollars a week net and the people too but it wouldn't work anymore, and now my leg is still limited because I can't stand in the same spot too long. I served as a witness in court for a traffic accident in 2012 and I had to use a cane when I stood before the judge.

I can't sit too long either, even when I write! I have to do this at my own pace and I have take breaks, and no job is going to allow that! More so because the blood thinner and blood pressure meds I'm on are also water pills and I often go at random.

If I could only see myself getting on a bus? Slowly and there was a time I was very athletic and often jogged with ankle weights on in the winter and summer times and I miss those days.

It's amazing how a persons life can change overnight and what follows too! People who I thought I knew didn't even call me when I was in the hospital or rehab, and yet they made the time to call me when they needed help in the past

and the saying came true! You don't know some people until you find them out! I don't hate them and I never will but forgiveness and trust are two different things, I can forgive but once trust is broken I cannot trust again.

Chapter 6 - New Challenges

If it wasn't for this family I knew in Florida I would have been homeless in N.J.

I stayed with them for 3 years and once my settlement came through I paid 3 years back rent and got my own place and it felt good again, but it would only last for one year.

The lady who took me in is an older person as of now 81 years old and bed ridden, one day she called me and said The IRS audited her and the bank account was frozen, it was later resolved but in the meantime I had to move into a new place.

It was next door to my old place and I moved her in with me and her granddaughter too, along with a dog, things were going good for awhile and when it came time to sign the lease she wanted to be on it too!

She is the proud type and wanted to pay half the bills, and when it came time to renew the lease her credit report read evictions! I had gone to the office at San Marcos in Lake Park Florida and told them it could have been a case of mistaken identity!

They wouldn't accept that, even though I told them there are some people with my same name and it still didn't matter to them!

I was there for 2 years and they said I could stay and I would sign the lease but they told me she had to leave the property, and if she stayed with me I'd be evicted!

So as of November 3 2015 she was homeless and so was I, how could I turn someone away who saved me from eviction? So I gave up my apartment and put everything in storage and that was only the beginning for us.

Chapter 7 - New Nightmares

Before we left I asked the management if they would grant us just one more year and they declined, and it didn't matter if I appealed to their better nature they still said no.

We got in my car and 2 small dogs with us and off to The Red Roof Inn which took pets for free but we were there for only a week before moving on to The Days Inn, and after a week there the pet fees were too much and the dogs had to go to an animal shelter.

They weren't my dogs and I felt terrible bringing them there, and we kept trying to get another apartment but in the month of November in Florida is very hard, because alot of people from up north come here and they are known as

snow birds.

That makes it hard for residents of Florida to get places of their own, and as a result we were going from one hotel to another and stayed with various people from time to time. But that in itself is nice but people are also used to their own set routines.

Between the hotel bills they came out to over \$7,000 dollars and it made them even harder because of the time of year, had this all happened in the summer time I could have found a place easier.

If this were Las Vegas I could have gotten an apartment in two days, and all of this because an apartment complex wanted this woman off the property.

She was 80 years old at the time and even though she was a retired police officer from Queens NY it made no difference and she had to leave the property and couldn't stay with me.

I went to Google reviews and I left one but also found other ones that were very negative.

Chapter 8 - Improvements

I sent out messages to the state of Florida, the housing authority, 2 senators and legal aid and they know about this apartment complex and they are being investigated.

In the 2 years I lived there I saw several office people come and go and new owners as well, this place is a low income housing but it was well kept , just poor management!

From November 2015 to March of 2016 was a nightmare but finally found relief in April of 2016!

But even then the rent here by the beach is \$1.300 dollars a month, furnished with free cable and utilities and close to the beach, but there is the chance of a hurricane by the ocean.

I live one block away from the beach and even though it's nice the waves can be rough but in a hurricane that is the danger zone with the high winds.

I was very lucky this past hurricane Matthew didn't hit us hard here.

All well and good but theres no place like your own home in which your used too, because the bills were out of control. Because of hotel bills, eating take out food, and when people live outside their usual means they tend to

appreciate what they did have before more than they ever did!

Chapter 9 - 2008 to 2010

I go back to the year 2008

Before this all came to be this is what I had!

I had my own car, my own bank account, my own apartment!

I had a full time job taking home \$500 dollars a week!

I had a video collection!

I also had a part time job at Dunkin Donuts which made me extra money and free coffee!

Life was good and it seemed like there wasn't a worry in sight, or so I thought!

In 2009 that was only the beginning, the recession hit us hard and people were losing their jobs and the cost of living was going up!

In a period of 18 months I lost my part time job, my day job cut my overtime until I got it back!

Finding a part time job was next to impossible, my car kept breaking down and soon I had no car!

I had to take buses, the bills were getting bigger and my expenses were almost gone, it was one thing after another.

I was suffering from depression and got as high as 280 lbs.

Next thing I know I had 3 blood clots, and my job paid me only 60% of my salary.

Almost 10 years of living in Saddle Brook NJ, I had to leave and left only with 2 gym bags full of clothes and papers!

Chapter 10 - Be Thankful

I made it very clear to be thankful for what you have!

I wouldn't wish this on anyone! Even some people who don't like me, it is a horrible feeling to lose it all and in the

process of losing it all you lose more than you knew!

During this whole thing I found out who my true family and friends turned out to be!

When I was in the hospital for I had 4 phone calls and that was it!

People I thought I knew had time to go on their cell phones and the internet rather than call someone who was in a hospital bed, facing a life and death situation!

Yet some of these people made time to call me when they needed help and I was there for them!

I don't wish bad on anyone but one day this will come back at them and they will know how it feels when they find out people they thought they knew!

So when people read this book, try and focus on everything you have and be thankful for it! Before this all began I not only had my own apartment for nearly 10 years, I had my car for 9 years a Mercury Cougar red with a vinyl top.

Things begin to creep on a person without warning, and then all of a sudden, a persons life changes overnight with a life and death medical situation!

From there losing everything one had, and then to lose their independent way of living by staying with other people even though they are very good too you!

There is nothing like your own life the way you want it to be and having the things you already have, and when people get older they get wiser!

I am 59 years, and I take life more seriously and if I could go back 20 years I would have written my books and planned my future better than what I did.

But all in all, I survived a brutal one year of mishaps and it made me be thankful for what I have and who ever reads my book, be thankful for what you have! Sincerely Rich