

I was totally amazed when I read Jennifer Grey's story ("Back On Her Feet," December 2012/January 2013, http:// bit.ly/VZxKKy) because I had such a similar experience.

In 2004, I began experiencing terrible pain in my shoulder-or so I thought. I went to my doctor for X-rays, but he found nothing. I went about my business the best I could. But I couldn't even sit down in the bleachers for more than 15 minutes to watch my daughter play basketball. I would have to stand the rest of the game because the pain was excruciating.

Years later, I went back to my doctor, but still nothing was found. I decided to try a chiropractor, but after a few appointments, he realized he wasn't doing me any good and sent me back to the doctor. It had been almost five years of pain at that point. Then, while getting a neck massage one day, I became momentarily paralyzed, all the way down to my feet. I screamed and told the massage therapist to stop. I knew then that the problem was in my neck and not my shoulder. I called my doctor, and a CAT scan showed that the vertebrae in my neck were completely pressed against my spinal cord.

I was immediately set up with an appointment with a fantastic surgeon in Santa Barbara, CA.

In 2009, he performed a surgery very similar to Jennifer Grey's. They went in through the front and put in a titanium plate and fused my spinal cord together again. I will never have full use of my neck-for example, I can't look up all the way-but the pain is gone. I will forever be grateful.

> —Delores Penny Santa Maria, CA

Holiday Spirit

As a long time sufferer of chronic pain and chronic fatigue, I was finally diag-



nosed with fibromyalgia two years ago. Until very recently—much like Denise Tye-I would push myself to exhaustion. Reading her essay (http://bit.ly/ **ZPqod6**) really hit home and is a reminder that everything doesn't have to be perfect! Thank you, Denise.

> —Nicki Horn Port St. Lucie, FL

Organ Donation

In her article "Precious Gifts." from the October/November 2012 issue of Neurology Now, Editor-in-Chief Dr. Robin Brey discusses the importance of organ donation. I am married to one of the healthiest men alive, but he was just diagnosed with throat cancer out of the blue! Can you still donate organs if you have received chemotherapy or radiation? We both believe in donating organs but heard he no longer can.

—Julie Hagey

THE EDITOR RESPONDS: That is an excellent question, Julie. (People can read "Precious Gifts" on our website at http:// bit.ly/V5G5Pu.) Studies have shown that transplanting an organ from a cancer patient can lead to that same cancer in the recipient. This is true for nearly any type of cancer, including head and neck cancer, thus the reluctance to use organs from cancer patients. However, it depends on the stage of cancer, how long ago the cancer occurred, and how much risk the recipient is willing to accept. Each of these is a case-by-case decision

by the physician and recipient based on balancing the risk of disease transmission from the donor versus the risk of dying before another organ offer occurs.

After reading your editorial on organ giving, I asked my neurologist if at my age (88), any of my organs could still be used. He said yes, so I contacted an agency here in Florida and enrolled immediately. I shared this with my family and, after their initial shock, they realized how happy it made me feel to think that part(s) of me would live on to make someone's life a bit better. What a beautiful legacy to leave this world. I don't have a million dollars to leave, but my organs will feel like a million-dollar bequest to the recipients. Thank you for encouraging me to do something so worthwhile!

> —Elaine Anderson. Delray Beach, FL

THE EDITOR RESPONDS: Thank you for your wonderful letter, Elaine. Your statement, "I don't have a million dollars to leave, but my organs will feel like a million-dollar bequest to the recipients" is absolutely true and beautifully put.

QUICK CONNECT

Reading this copy in your doctor's office? Sign up for your own free subscription now using your mobile device.

