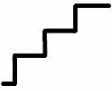


STILL SHOWING UP

	It was April 19, 2023. My mom's birthday and about 1.5 years since she passed away from a heart attack. I had just climbed two flights of stairs and was getting ready for bed when I felt this pressure and uneasiness in my chest. My thought was that it might be difficult to fall asleep and my wife's thought was that we should go to the ER. She convinced me when she said if I started feeling better on the way there we could come back.
	So, a quick ER tip. If you want immediate help and avoid waiting in lines, mention that you think you are having a heart attack. A medical NASCAR pit crew is immediately in action.
TROPONIN 0.04 337	I learned that there is an enzyme protein called troponin that is released into the bloodstream when there's a cardiac event. Less than 0.04 is normal (non-heart attack) – my troponin levels were 337. Several doctors commented on never seeing levels that high.
 12% \$250	I also learned that what I had is called a widow maker heart attack (not encouraging). Only 12% of those that have this type of heart attack outside of the hospital survive. I didn't know it at the time but I was about to pay \$250 for my ambulance ride from American Fork to Provo.
	After being wheeled out of the ambulance, the next thing I remember is being barely awake in this spacious operating room. I could hear the doctors talking and one of them said something about four stents. I looked down my shirt and didn't see anything which confused me. I could feel that my right arm was in some kind of clamp and I couldn't move it.
	Overall, for something that seemed like such a big deal, it didn't feel like it. Nearly no pain, nothing like you watch on TV, and I can no longer see the tiny incision that was on my wrist.
BUT	But wait, there's more...
	That year, I went to the ER four more times. Twice because I was convinced I was having another heart attack. It turned out my troponin levels were still coming down from the original event.
	The other two visits were because of nosebleeds. Let me explain that adventure. After the heart attack I was on two blood thinners. These nosebleeds would start out of nowhere and just... gush.

	I might be the only guy who has: - sent his wife to the store for tampons - has a size preference - knows the frustration of bleeding through one. I had these stashed everywhere. In case you were wondering, I did cut the string off to salvage any remaining dignity.
	Eventually, they put a rhino rocket in one nostril which is a special kind of hell I have vowed to never experience again. A rhino rocket is what happens when a tampon and a torpedo have a baby.
CAUTERIZATION	Then came cauterization. One nostril didn't hurt at all, which completely blindsided me. When I later had the other nostril cauterized was the worst pain I've felt in my life. Not all cauterizations are created equal.
CELLULITIS	And somewhere in the middle of all this, I had three cellulitis flare-ups. Warm to the touch, swollen, and can lead to major issues if not treated quick. These burning, swollen skin infections can flare up from tiny injuries. This was one of many signs that my body as a whole was impacted.
1/4	As these months passed, I learned that a quarter of my heart was dead. Not two sizes too small like the Grinch...dead. This explained my decreased energy and being much more sensitive to stress.
...	I'm still very much in the middle of this story. And while I've received small moments of clarity along the way, I'm still trying to answer the bigger questions: • What comes next? • How do I support my family now? • And what am I supposed to do with this second chance? There's no happily-ever-after I can give you — not yet. But as I pause here, there are two lessons worth sharing.
Lesson #1 Share Your Experience	My mother-in-law started retaining water, and because of what I'd gone through, we recognized it as a cardiac warning before her doctor did — which likely saved her life. Sometimes the experience you'd never choose becomes the knowledge someone else desperately needs.
Lesson #2 Let Your Body Vote	After losing the job I'd held for 27 years — and with my new health limits — I wasn't sure what to do next. I'd always felt like I need to continue my education, but at 50, an MBA felt too late and not helpful. My therapist asked, "When you think about that decision, does your body lean forward or backward?" I leaned forward. It's been a life hack ever since.
12 Days of Christmas	During 2023, I even started writing my own version of the 12 Days of Christmas. I've lived through: one widow-maker heart attack, two nose cauterizations,

	3. three bouts of cellulitis, 4. four stents, 5. and five trips to the ER...
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And I still didn't find clarity — at least not the big kind I keep hoping for.
But here's what I did find:

**You don't wait for clarity to show up.
You show up, and clarity meets you along the way.**