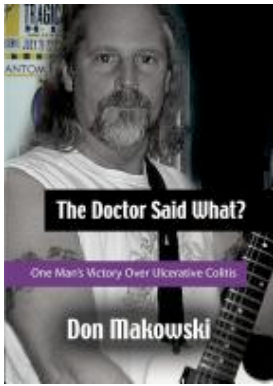


The Doctor Said What?

One Man's Victory Over Ulcerative Colitis

Don Makowski



This book is about author Don Makowski's healing of Ulcerative Colitis using home fecal transplant therapy. It details his journey from diagnosis, through the medical systems' failure to help, and finally finding a cure. He describes what it's like to live with Ulcerative Colitis and how devastating this condition is. Don offers hope through his story that others may be cured. No one should have to suffer as he did and now they won't have to.

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ISBN: 978-1-945177-47-7

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2016

First Edition

The Dog Gets Sick

My health before U.C. had always been good and I considered myself healthy and strong. My wife called me the dog because I could eat anything. I stayed fit and trim, was active, exercised, played musical instruments, sang, and wrote music. I was happily married and had children and grandchildren. Life was good. I was employed as an injection mold designer and made a decent living.

Tool and Die can be a very demanding profession for the toolmakers, owners, and designers, especially in a small shop environment. I worked at a small tool shop in Erie, PA when I first started to notice a change in my system. This was right after the business had seen much success and had moved to a new facility. I was still healthy and taking daily walks of about a mile long at lunchtime. I noticed that my butt was starting to itch more and more as I walked. It felt wet, like it was leaking, and I usually had to go to the bathroom when I got back. I also noticed that I was going to the

bathroom more and that my stools were looser. No big deal. I could live with it. I was a beer drinker too. I didn't drink much liquor, only Coors light. I drank a lot of it on weekends but very little during the week. My wife and I loved to go out drinking and dancing to live rock music every weekend. We had a blast following the local scene!

I was a designer at this shop for six years when the owners saw a downturn in business after 9/11. The pressure started to get to them. I thought that I would always work for them but this was not to be. I was let go one day and was absolutely shocked to find myself unemployed. Luckily there was a tool shop right next door. I had a friend who worked there who told the owners that they would be crazy to not hire me. They did and I even got a raise! This was a stressful time but it was ok. I was still ok.

I had settled into my new position nicely and got along with my new boss, owners, and fellow employees well. The toolmakers there were very helpful and it was a good place to work. After I was there a couple years the owners decided to cut our pay by 10% and to eliminate our overtime. They said they had to do it to remain competitive with the Chinese. That was a huge

hit to take and now I was worrying about losing my house. I believe that the stress from this situation was partially responsible for my first flare.

In the fall of 2006 I released my first CD of original music under the name Dee Girard (www.deegirard.com). This was an exciting time for me as I had always wanted to write music. I wrote all the songs, set up a home studio, learned how to use new digital recording equipment, recorded and engineered, played all the instruments and sang, added harmonies and did all the editing on this disc. It was a lot of work and the culmination of a three year project. When my wages were cut I had to sell off all of my musical equipment to pay my mortgage. This was very difficult but I had no other options. We had also planned and paid for a trip to Savannah that summer. About a week before my vacation I started to notice blood in my stools. My first thoughts were that I had cancer now so I might as well just keep it to myself and go and enjoy this one last vacation with my wife before I died. We had a nice time but I was worried and knew I had to face it soon.

After returning from vacation things got steadily worse. I had not told anyone and it was awful keeping

this to myself. One Friday afternoon at work I had to go to the bathroom again. I was going 6-10 times per day and I know my fellow employees and boss were wondering what was going on. I sat down and nothing came out but bright red blood. I knew this was not going to resolve itself and it was time to call my family doctor. I made an appointment to see her in a couple weeks. I thought they would want me to go to the ER or want to see me right away but they didn't act like it was a big deal. Really weird! After seeing her and getting the finger probe she told me that there was blood. I knew that already! That's why I was there for the love of god! She set up an appointment for me to see a gastroenterologist and said there was nothing else that could be done at this time. Yup, weird!

I first saw The G.I.'s physician assistant in the late summer of 2007. She asked questions about my bowel habits and about my family history. I told her that I had an aunt that had died of Crohn's disease, an uncle and a cousin who had colostomy bags, a brother, a sister, and a nephew who were diagnosed with UC. I thought that my condition was serious but she said nothing needed to be done yet and that I would need a colonoscopy in about a month. She never asked me about lifestyle and

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I never got to see the doctor. I was pretty bad off at that time but had no idea how bad it was going to get. I was having diarrhea 5-6 times a day and losing weight quickly. Finally the day came for me to do the bowel prep. What a horrifying experience that was! After having diarrhea so bad I was now inducing it! I had to stay in the bathroom most of the night and was screaming in agony. I had the colonoscopy and was sent home with no help. I thought that was strange since by looking at me you could tell that I was anemic and looked sick. I called the doctors' office several days later to see what they could do for me but was told that I had to wait for the results of the colonoscopy before they could determine a treatment. The receptionist told me to take some Imodium! The doctor was on vacation! Wow!

I called my G.I. again as they still had not spoken to me about the results of my colonoscopy. He told me that I had Ulcerative Colitis. I would have it for the rest of my life and that I would always be on medication. I couldn't believe it! I felt like my life was over. I asked him if there was anything I could do. Could I change my diet? What about drinking? Should I stop? He was unconcerned about this and just said no, diet had

nothing to do with this disease and there was nothing I could do but continue taking Asacol which wasn't making a bit of difference. I cried that day in my bosses' office after that call. I felt absolutely lost. I was a defective human being.

Another week went by and still no help. I made an appointment with a holistic doctor who had treated himself for Crohn's disease. I had one session with this guy, I don't remember his name, but he seemed to know what he was doing. He performed acupuncture on me and sold me some Chinese herbs, vegetable mix and powders all at a cost of nearly \$300. I began these as soon as I got home and was now at the point where I could no longer go to work. I took an emergency leave of absence.

The next week was absolute hell. The herbs and vegetables that the holistic doctor gave me seemed to be making my condition worse. I was constantly going to the bathroom and bleeding bright red blood. Another call to my G.I. and I was told by his secretary that he was still on vacation and I should just take more Imodium. I told her that I needed help now or would end up in the hospital. She said she would tell him when he got back. Nice! I was stranded with no place to

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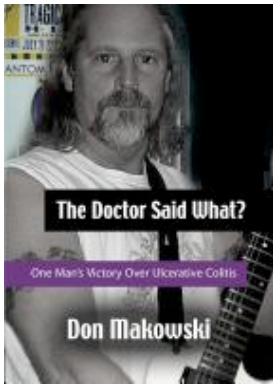
turn and a few days later I was not able to walk on my own and had to go to the ER. My wife practically carried me in.

After some initial blood work, a CAT scan and stool testing I was admitted to the intensive care unit with severe dehydration and anemia but the doctors still didn't know or tell me what was causing this. The pain meds they gave me helped a little but I was still having urgent diarrhea and had to keep getting up from my hospital bed, dragging the IV unit with me to the bathroom. It was impossible to get any rest in the hospital. I spent 5 days there. The meds they gave me seemed to be calming my guts down some. I was on prednisone and Cipro along with a few other pills that I don't remember. I was released to go home but still in great pain. The diarrhea slowed down some and with the pain meds I could sleep a little. I was glad to get out of the hospital but the severe damage to my intestines would take more than 6 months to heal.

At this point I had to go on Workman's Compensation as I still could not return to work. At 60% of my wages it wouldn't be long until we were so behind in our finances that we would be in a hopeless situation. I had to get back to work ASAP! After a month

at home I decided to press my family doctor into releasing me to return to work. She did so reluctantly and I went back thinking this was all behind me now.

I tapered off of the prednisone over the next few months and seemed to be gaining my health back very slowly. I kept thinking that my G.I. was wrong and that I was better now. I was so wrong. Slowly my diarrhea came back and the bleeding started up again. This time I was determined to search the internet for a cause and cure. I knew there had to be answers out there and I would find them. I was not going to let this disease ruin my life!



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