

I first knew there was something wrong with me in January, 1998. I was very hot at night (with no sweating) and often had to sleep with ice bags around my neck. I thought it might just be menopause.....I was 54 then. I simultaneously developed a small lump on the left side of my neck to match the one I had on the right side of my neck for about 10 years. I felt OK otherwise. It wasn't until I went to my internist in August, 1998, that I realized there could be a much more serious problem. He felt the lump on the left side and said, (it's seared in my memory), I don't like how that feels.....feels like it could be a tumor.....you should have a biopsy. I totally freaked out.....I knew what his words meant. That I could have cancer. I knew the 7 warning signs of cancer, and a lump was one of them. Anyway, I didn't have the biopsy, and proceeded to carry on normally, thinking that because I felt well there couldn't possibly be anything wrong as serious as cancer, but fearing the worst. So I began to try to self-treat myself for what I was hoping was just some sort of infection. I went to the health food store and got an alcohol extract of red root and stillingia, for glands and the immune system. Wasn't too long before I broke out in a rash. In the next few months, I noticed a couple of new, very small lumps. I now think my self-treating made me worse. At this time, I decided on acupuncture with Dr. Helen Liu. She gave me some pills for the neck glands and acupuncture. Against her advice, I only took the pills for a very brief time, though I continued with acupuncture. Until one day. Dr. Liu told me that until I went to the doctor's and got a diagnosis, there was nothing more she could do for my condition, so I stopped seeing her for a while. But I was scared, and didn't go to the doctor's. As the days and months wore on, I became more alarmed about my condition. In Dec., 1999, I had a cold, and because I was still playing doctor on myself, I took an extra-strong medicinal mushroom liquid extract to help my immune system. So I thought, until the next day, when, to my shock, there appeared all around my neck and ears new enlarged lymph nodes. By now, I was totally flipping out. In January 2000, my voice teacher (I'm a singer) suggested that my enlarged nodes might be due to an allergy. So, I went to an allergist and had him do a full work-up, transdermal skin testing, etc. The etc. part was a CBC with differential. Turns out I don't have any bad allergies at all, but the doctor called one morning in March and said, There's a problem with your bloodwork. I think you might have **chronic lymphocytic leukemia**, but it's benign. We'll re-test just in case. The white blood cell count was 20, twice normal. I was flipping out again, here, this doctor tells me I have leukemia, but it's benign? I got on the internet (I learned just a month before how to use it), and found out that it was not benign, but could result in death in 5 or 10 years. Much later, I found more calming information that some folks can live with it their whole lives. Fast forward.....2 blood tests later, I still had high WBCs. But I really freaked out, when in April, the WBCs had risen to 25, and my internist referred me to a hematologist/oncologist. **My diagnosis of CLL was official on May 24, 2000.** Since that time, I tried many, many alternative therapies to get rid of it. With the help of an M.D. who specialized in nutritional therapies, I did a long fast.....one week no solid food, 2 weeks no carbs, Sonne's intestinal cleansers, coffee enemas, and juicing. That was only one thing I tried. I tried apricot kernels for the laetrile. I switched to predominantly organic foods. I dropped lots of weight (at first 30 lbs., from 167 to 137), and I looked healthier. I tried honey with bee venom. I went to a healing church and got a miracle. I did this, I did that. I exercised, prayed, drank lots

of water, etc., etc. I had a falling-out with the oncologist, and quit going to any oncologist starting in May, 2001. I said to myself, The heck with it, I've got CLL, so what, it's slow-growing. It wasn't until I went to the emergency room in late January, 2002, with a gallbladder attack, that I found out just how bad my CLL had gotten. They automatically do bloodwork there, and my WBCs had hit **90,000**. The surgeon was chomping at the bit to take out my gallbladder, but I said, Wait a minute. I have CLL, and I need to consult with an oncologist. They sent me home the same day with an antibiotic prescription (today, my gallbladder's fine, I just had biliary colic and passed a stone). I began to go to Dr. Ian Flinn at Johns Hopkins, where I am treated with respect. Anyway, God has been good to me. My CLL remained relatively stable from Jan. 2002 to May 2004, with WBC counts hanging **between 61,660 (in May 2002), to 118,570 (in May 2004)**. I was tested every 3 mos., and the WBCs averaged in the 90,000 range. What caused the stability is anyone's guess. Even so, the official report from Johns Hopkins said that I had slowly progressive disease. After I was officially diagnosed with CLL in 2000, about a year or so later I returned to Dr. Liu for acupuncture. I believe her treatments were a factor in the stability. One day, she recommended that I see a colleague of hers from China, Dr. Luke Tian, an herbal oncologist. I was intrigued, but because I am a very cautious person, and I had stable CLL, I was in no big hurry to meet him. Eventually, I changed my mind. **My CLL was not getting any better, and I figured, What have I got to lose?** It's only herbs. It took me almost a whole year before I met Dr. Tian. I was very impressed with his knowledge and his openness. He answered every single question I had and gave me lots of time. At first, I took the little round herbal pills, but one day, Dr. Tian told me that he was excited that he could now offer me the **special formula** he had created that would be manufactured by a pharmaceutical company. He was very enthusiastic, and it rubbed off on me. I began the CLL formula in June. Once again, I was cautious. Though I was supposed to take the pills 3 times a day, at first, I took them once or twice a day. After a week or so, though, I took it 3 times. I trusted Dr. Tian. I figured I had no choice, as I desperately want to be free of CLL, plus it takes up a lot of my time doing all my own personal research about it, and communicating with other CLL victims. Well, it turns out that my trust was not misplaced. I got my bloodwork results the end of September, just a few months after I started taking the special formula. I was in shock from happiness. In May, **my WBCs were 118,500; now they were 69,200, about a 50,000 drop**. The counts hadn't been this low in 2 years and 3 months. **My absolute lymphocyte count was cut more than half. It had been 116,199 in May, but was now 56,744**. My % of lymphocytes went from 98% down to 92%. My red blood cell rose from 3.89 to 4.04. The platelet count went up from 197 to 222. My absolute neutrophils (the good guys) rose from 2,371 to 3,460. **All other blood parameters improved**. Simultaneously, about mid-September, I was astonished when I noticed that the **huge lump under my left armpit was much smaller**. For a long time, it felt as if I were carrying a tennis ball under that arm, and it was obvious when I wore a tight shirt that the material was pulling there. But now, that sensation has gone away. The right underarm swelling also decreased, as did the swellings in my groin, both significantly. The nodes around my neck, however, continue mostly as they were, with only a slight decrease. Dr. Tian tells me that they may take longer to go away, I think because they were the first to appear, they'll be the last to go. Then, just about 10 days ago (mid-Oct.), I was very surprised that it was easier to

swallow and to breathe. I took a flashlight and looked in a mirror at the back of my throat, where the food goes down, and I had more room. I was amazed. Altogether, my progress toward a cure is indeed miraculous. I am sure that this trend will continue, and my CLL will no longer be a problem, just a bad nightmare I finally woke up from.

Ellen Rhudy  
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