



# WAIT 2 WORRY

by Lori Hartwell

Whenever I add my signature, I type “Live, Lori” instead of “Love, Lori.” This used to frustrate me since I had to go back and correct it, but I soon realized that my subconscious was trying to tell me something.

Kidney disease isn't for the faint of heart, and every day we have is a gift. Today is a gift. Instead of being excited that we were given another day, too often we forget about enjoying the moment. I love this quote by Alice Morse Earle: “Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it is called the present.”

I too have been guilty of not living in the moment. I find myself rehashing painful or traumatic past events and worrying about what the future

might hold for me. After more than 45 surgeries, 13 years of dialysis, and four transplants, I wonder whether I've used up all of my lives. After all, how many times can I beat the odds?

So I decided to try to listen to my body and my mind, to take notice when I'm enjoying life and living in the moment and try to engage in those activities more often. I don't know about you, but I have this committee in my head that likes to interrupt me by creating all kinds of doom and gloom scenarios when I'm enjoying the moment. (I hope that others have this committee too, since I don't want to be diagnosed with yet another illness!)

I had to learn how to quiet the committee down. One way that helps me do this and enjoy life is to slow down. If I take a deep breath and center myself, it helps me stay in the moment.

I also use the strategy of “waiting to worry.” For example, fretting over medical test results, losing or forgetting something, or needing a response from someone before I can move forward on a particular task.

In addition, I find that playing with animals can help me stay in the moment. When we walk Miles, one of our dogs, all of a sudden he'll stop and focus on a squirrel in a tree. If I pull out a few of the squeaky toys from the toy chest, all of my animals immediately pay attention since they're eager to play. Animals are great teachers of the concept of living in the moment. Too, switching my routine, like making breakfast for dinner, can help me avoid being on automatic pilot. And the absolute best way for me to stay focused on the moment is to create something.

So I guess the moral of the story is, as Michael J. Fox and others have said, “If you have one foot in tomorrow and one foot in yesterday, you're bound to find yourself pissing on today.” Which strategies are you going to employ to LIVE and enjoy the moment?

Live,  
*Lori*

Lori Hartwell, Founder & President of the Renal Support Network (RSN), was diagnosed with kidney disease at the age of two. In 1993 she founded RSN to instill “health, happiness, and hope” into the lives of those affected by chronic kidney disease. Lori is also the author of the book “Chronically Happy: Joyful Living in Spite of Chronic Illness” and is a four-time kidney transplant recipient.

