

October 16, 1992

Dear Ian,

I was given the information about who you are yesterday. I think that a phone call to you would be more appropriate than a letter but at this point in time I think that I would be too emotionally affected to be able to talk. It is much easier to write this than to say it.

On October 15, 1991, I was admitted to the Bone Marrow Transplant unit of Kaiser Permanente Hospital in Los Angeles, California; exactly one year ago. The first six days I received chemotherapy to destroy my own bone marrow. On the sixth day there was no turning back, without new marrow I would not survive long. The evening of October 24th, the bone marrow transplant coordinator, Sharon Desposito, came walking into my room with a small ice chest she had just received from a personal courier at the airport. She opened the ice chest and withdrew a small plastic pouch, held it up to the light and said "This is your new life". I looked up at the pouch to see this beautiful crimson red liquid as though it were a crystal with mystic powers. My doctors told me that the transplant required about 800 cc's of marrow, yet, this pouch contained 1400 cc's. Nearly twice what I needed. For the next four hours I watched every bit of that marrow flow through the tubing and into me.

My parents were responsible for my first birthday in 1958. You are responsible for the second one of that October day. I have had a year to think of what to say to you and I've tried to find the best way to thank you for what you have done for me but there isn't a language on this earth that possesses the correct adjectives to express my gratitude for your gift. You have given my wife, Valerie, her husband and life companion back to her; my four-year-old son, Evan, a father; and to me, a reason to someday travel to the east coast to shake hands with you and personally thank you. I know personally what you went through for this procedure, I've had the pleasure of having a bone marrow aspiration done three times; I know it isn't fun.

It has taken a full year to recover from the transplant and the side effects of the chemotherapy but I'm happy to say that I'm feeling very much back to normal as of just recently. My doctors have reduced the medications I've been taking and it has had a dramatic effect. I should be able to resume work and life as normal about the first of the coming new year.

Thanksgiving this year has taken on a completely new meaning. For this one and all the years to follow I will be eternally grateful to you. There are a few hundred people I know who would also like me to pass along a heartfelt thank you for what you have done for me. There is no greater gift than that which you have given me. I thank you once again. You didn't save my life, you gave me a completely new one.