



Kaoabunga!

Introduction

From May 30, 2007 to May 25, 2009, the Kao family maintained Kaoabunga.com as a family blog, mostly to share news and updates about Dad's lung cancer prognosis. Dad passed away on March 17, 2009.

This is the archive of posts that chronicle this journey, which contain Dad's last writings for his friends and family.



Kaobunga!

Jun 4
2007

Message to JCI

A message from Dad at 1:51am.



Dear friends:

Can't imagine almost 1 month has passed since the diagnosis. That was the roughest month in my life. Now I've got some strength back. So I can tell you what has happened.

Everything started with a minor chest pain in March which doctors had no clue about the cause. The pain advanced so quickly that almost knocked me out on 4/4 and I was brought to an ER by an ambulance. Since chest X-ray and blood test showed nothing. I was treated for pain and released. With the follow-up X-ray 5 days later, my doctor found pneumonia. I was given antibiotics for a week but the pain never went away. In the third X-ray on 5/8 my doctor found a shadow and immediately sent me to a lung doctor the following day. The diagnosis was cancer.

Since the diagnosis, everything went at the highest speed. CT scan located four tumors in my lung including one on the chest bone - the source of my pain. MRI of my head was negative but PET scan found 14 additional tumors in my liver, 1 big and 13 tiny ones, and another big one on my pelvis. The classification was stage IV non-small cell lung cancer, a common one for nonsmokers. A six-month treatment plan was scheduled.

I was implanted an IV port on 5/17 and radiation and chemotherapy started on 5/21. That's the beginning of two weeks of hell. Fever hit me on 5/22 which brought me to ER but the doctor found nothing and I was sent home after they knocked down the temperature. Fever hit me again the next day which drew an ambulance and I was hospitalized for the rest of the week. I was given combinations of antibiotics although tests and cultures were all negative except that white counts were high, suggesting infection somewhere. The theory was that pneumonia was never cleaned up. Since I was responding to the antibiotics, I was sent home on 5/26.

The fever and treatment wore me down so much that I spent almost 75% of time in bed or chair. Now the strength starts to come back slowly. I hope the road ahead is not as bumpy. This is the update for now. I'll let you know my progress periodically.

Wen



Kaobunga!

Jun 11
2007

Timeline of Events, Mid-March to Early June

A message from Yvonne at 1:12am.



Here's a timeline of everything that's happened with Dad from the period leading up to the diagnosis and for the month after, for anyone who needs to be caught up.

Mid-March: Begins having chest pain.

April 4: Goes to the ER due to severe chest pain.

April 9: Diagnosed with pneumonia and put on antibiotics.

April 30: Some shadowing is found on a chest X-ray.

May 8: Chest CT scan.

May 9: Diagnosed with lung cancer.

May 10: Bronchoscopy and biopsy.

May 11: Visit radiation oncology.

May 14: Visit chemo oncology.

May 15-18: MRI, EKG, PET scan, abdomen CT, and installed port.

May 19: Peter's graduation.

May 21: First chemo and radiation treatments.

May 22: Visit the ER due to high fever. Received antibiotic IV and discharged at 2am on May 23rd.

May 23: Visit primary doctor and Pulmonology in the morning. Received more IVs and antibiotics. High fever returned around 2:30pm. Returned to the ER and admitted for inpatient treatment.

May 24-25: Hospitalization, blood work, more IVs and antibiotics.

May 26: Discharged from the hospital in the afternoon.

May 27-28: Very fatigued; slept most of the day.

May 29: Doctor decides not to give chemo due to fatigue and gives IV fluids instead. Radiation continues.

May 30: Peter has his cornea transplant.

May 31: More IV fluids, but still fatigued and having lots of problems with movement. Visit Neurologist.

June 3: Feeling better; movement has improved.



Kaobunga!

Jun 11
2007

Thank You!

A message from Mom at 1:26am.



Thanks to all our friends for all of the support— the iPod, Ensure, phone calls, informational support, help downloading music and setting up e-mail, get well cards, transportation support, and for all the food/fruit, and all kinds of assistance, mentally and physically.

Jun 11
2007

Hello, Friends

A message from Dad at 8:33pm.



After surviving May 2007, a very forgettable month, the only direction to go is up.

Today, 6/11, I finished the first chemo cycle without any complexity. Everything seems going well as planned. Here is some good news to cheer about.

Last Monday, 6/4, I complained about the tumor in my pelvis interfering with my walk and the doctor decided to do something about it. This was a giant one, measured at 3.5 cm, according to the PET scan done in May. And apparently there was another small one I missed. So they ordered CT scan on 6/5. Today we were given the report saying this giant fellow was measured at 3.1 cm by 2.1 cm and the little one was unidentifiable, i.e. disappeared. No new tumors were found. Whatever happening appears working and this is worthy of celebration. So I won myself a meal of beef stew. Hurray!



Kaobunga!

Jul 3
2007

Milestone 1

A message from Dad at 3:33pm.



Today we reached the first milestone, the completion of radiation therapy. After the last treatment, we had a ceremony celebrating the completion of treatment – just like a graduation party. The head nurse read a poem and presented a gift to me with several reminders. I then rang a bell signaling the beginning of a new life. It was fun.

On the chemo side, we have completed 25% of treatment and the side effects start taking tolls. However, so far they are still tolerable. The burn marks on my chest and back from radiation start to show up and the skin has become very itchy. My swallowing sometimes hurts and I have lost some appetite. In order to maintain weight I have to spread the meals – more frequently with less food each time. Fatigue is still a major problem. In conjunction with the amount of water I have to run through the system, I have developed an irregular sleeping pattern – a lot of short naps but lack of long-hour sleep. However, the overall sleeping time is still 8 to 10 hours. Even though having these side effects, my energy level is improving, slow but steadily.

The doctor seems very happy about my progress. Originally we were supposed to have re-scans six weeks after the completion of radiation treatments. But on yesterday's visit, he moved the re-scan day to the 17th of this month, only two weeks after the last radiation treatment. The results of the re-scan will tell how effective these treatments are. That will be the next milestone. So stay tuned.



Kaobunga!

Jul 24
2007

Milestone 2

A message from Dad at 9:00am.



Dear friends,

During yesterday's visit, my doctor explained the results of rescan to us. To avoid lots of medical jargon that makes no sense to an ordinary person like me, I translate what he said as the following. The number and size of tumors in my lung and liver have been reduced by 25% to 50%, and the ones on the bone have been stable. No new ones have been found. That's good news. The bad news is that with this pace, I need at least two more cycles of chemotherapy. This will take us to the end of September before the next evaluation.

The side effects of chemotherapy continue to linger around. However, most of them have gradually become manageable and I'm not ready to enter the Yul Brynner look-alike contest yet. Now I'm focusing on reducing naps and rebuilding my strength and energy level. It's going to be a long journey, so better start sooner than later. Since I don't feel pain anymore, we have decided to cut off pain pills and see how it goes.

We've come a long way and the direction appears to be correct. So the journey continues and we hope for more good news down the road to share with you. Until then, stay tuned.



Kaobunga!

Sep 5
2007

Update-Sept. 5, 2007

A message from Dad at 8:01pm.



Just as we thought things were improving steadily, here came the surprise.

The CT scan at the end of July revealed a few new patches in my right lung. At that time the lung doctor was suggesting inflammation as a result of radiation but the radiologist disagreed. So they agreed to wait and see. About one week later, I started to cough day and night with shortness of breath and occasional fever up to 101 F. So they did chest X-ray, lung function tests and another CT scan only to find out a big shadow in my right lung which wasn't functioning normally.

I was given a cycle of antibiotics, thinking the cause was the pneumonia I had in July coming back. The follow-up chest X-ray, however, was worse than the previous one. So I was given stronger antibiotics which could cause diarrhoea. I lost five pounds in two weeks and the cough got worse. Enough is enough. Finally the lung doctor decided to have another bronchoscopy and biopsy. This time it confirmed that I had the so-called radiation pneumonia. Only about 15% of the patients receiving radiation therapy will develop this disease. I guess I'm in that lucky 15%. Maybe I should buy a lottery ticket.

I am taking prednisone for two weeks starting today. The medicine has lots of side effects including loss of bone mass, suppression of immune system, weight gain, high blood sugar, weaken muscle, loss of sleep, belly pain ... (Here we go again. zzz....) Sometimes it makes me wonder if the modern technology is helping or shifting problems. Seriously, though, I have to be very careful about not getting infection. Nothing is small when the immune system is not in full strength.

Because of these troubles, chemo has been put off for three weeks, i.e. the earliest they can resume is next Monday. I hope this is just a temporary unexpected setback. I'll continue to walk with my chin up.



Kaobunga!

Dec 4
2007

Update – Dec. 5, 2007

A message from Dad at 9:23pm.



It has been a while since the last update. During this period of time I was fighting off the radiation pneumonia while continuing the chemotherapy. There was not much to talk about.

On Monday after Thanksgiving, I received the final dose of the scheduled chemotherapy. One week later I had a confirmation CT scan and brain MRI. Yesterday we reviewed the results from scans and I received good news and not-so-good news from the doctor. The good news was that the tumors on the bones were below the detection limit. So were those in the lung but two which had shrunk significantly. The not-so-good news was one of the original five tumors in the liver appeared growing back while the other four were not detectable. In addition, they identified several new lesions in the liver. The doctor was concerning that the cancer cells might have become resistant to the first drug. So he ordered another six cycles of chemotherapy with a different drug, beginning next Monday. In the mean time, a P.E.T. scan was scheduled on 12th, which would reveal a better picture of the cancer cell activities. We have to wait and see.

Considering my conditions in May, I take this as a huge step to the right direction, although a complete victory is still not in sight yet. I hope P.E.T. can have a better result. In the mean time, the fight will continue.



Kaobunga!

Jan 14
2008

Update – Jan. 11, 2008

A message from Dad at 6:03am.

Happy New Year to all my friends.

Year 2007, the roughest year in my life, is finally behind me. But it didn't leave without putting up another scary moment.

First thing first, let me pick up from what was left last month – the PET results from 12/12/2007. According to the radiologist's read, the good news was the marked improvement in the neck and chest with decreases in both size and activities of tumors since 5/16/2007. The bad news was that they found 12 lesions in the liver with the largest doubled in size compared to 5/16/2007. The activity, however, was comparable both times.

The results were somewhat confusing because a CT scan on 11/26/2007 did not reveal the size of the tumors in the liver. We asked the oncologist if it was possible that a tumor doubled its size in merely 2 weeks. The answer was unlikely. But he also emphasized the difficulty in reading those images. So, am I getting better or worse? I guess nobody knows for sure at this moment.

The second round of chemo therapy started on 12/17/2007. While I was trying to adjust to the new medicine, I found increases in shortness of breath, slowly but steadily through the treatment. We thought that was a side effect of the medicine. It was the night of Christmas, the shortness of breath became very bad. In the clinic visit next morning, Shu communicated the situation to the doctor and demanded measurement of the blood oxygen level. It was 85%, way below normal. It didn't take long for them to decide where I should go. An ambulance was called in and I was transferred to Columbia Hospital. A CT scan that afternoon confirmed the doctor's concern. There was blood clot in the lungs, covering almost one-third of the area – another silent killer associated with lung cancer patients.

I was hospitalized for 5 days. The only way to treat blood clot is use of blood thinner. In order to control the viscosity of blood, they had to experiment me with different dosages. In order to avoid spread of the clot with extra movements, particularly to the brain which spells "hasta la vista, baby", I got a restraint order. I could only move from bed to restroom and back. After 5 days, they were finally satisfied with the dosage and the viscosity of my blood, so I could go home before New Year eve. The oncologist has since taken over the monitoring the thickness of the blood. They are drawing blood every other day for INR test and adjusting the medicine accordingly.

Well, I don't know if there are more surprises ahead. They won't tell me and it seems that I have to learn every single one in the hard way. Although the improvement is slow, at least it is consistently going in the right direction. The new year always brings the new hopes. Stay tuned.



Kaobunga!

Feb 17
2008

New Direction – Feb. 17, 2008

A message from Dad at 5:28pm.



The second-line medicine of chemotherapy apparently was not working very well. Shortness of breath and cough continued to worsen through January. Eventually, temperature went up again on January 27 and I had to be hospitalized again. The same old story repeated, i.e. they checked everything they knew or wanted to know and nothing was positive. They ended up giving me a strong dose of antibiotic and sent me home. Before they sent me home, they tried to persuade me to sign up for Home Hospice, i.e. they threw in the white towel.

Their attitude forced us nothing but seeking for a second opinion. Through the coordinators, we were able to see a doctor at Froedtert within a week. After reading my records and examinations, the doctor kindly said that he could help and offered a different type of treatment, the so-called targeted treatment. A medicine called Tarceva, blocking a specific protein on the surface of cancer cells which sends growth signal, will slow or stop the growth of the cells. This medicine works for non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) in an advanced stage or metastasis, and has to be used after failure of one previous chemotherapy. It is particularly effective for a non-smoking Asian man with NSCLC. The direction appears to be right and timing is perfect. So, we give a shot and hope the change is for good.



Kaobunga!

Apr 2
2008

Update – April 2, 2008

A message from Dad at 5:59pm.



On Monday, March 31, we received the long overdue good news from the doctor at Froedtert during the visit — Tarceva was working. But the news didn't come without a twist.

I had a CT scan on March 18, about a month after I started Tarceva. Before we visit the doctor on the following Monday, we already learned from the grapevine that the CT results were not good, suggesting Tarceva was not functioning, and doctors already reached agreement to give up any treatment. Without seeing the report or films, we really couldn't do anything.

But I just wondered how the hell was I gaining energy since taking Tarceva if conditions were getting worse. Couple days later, the picture got a little clearer.

The conclusion was drawn based on the comparison to the CT scan done on November 26 last year. That raised a flag. Since November was the end of the first chemo cycle but my conditions were deteriorating during the second chemo cycle in December and January. Besides, I didn't start Tarceva until February 12 this year. The November CT was out-of-date by three months. Without a valid baseline to compare with, how could one draw an important decision like that? So, I shot them an email, emphasizing the invalid comparison and questioning their decision. Luckily when I was hospitalized in December, they ran a CT on me for blood clot in the lungs and Froedtert got a copy. So, we were told to bring the March 18 films to Froedtert on the March 31 visit. In the mean time, we resumed taking Tarceva.

So, the March 18 films were compared with the December 26 films, focusing on cancer cells. And the March films actually showed smaller tumors in the liver, suggesting Tarceva was working. Suddenly it all makes sense. The second chemo cycle actually didn't do anything toward tumors but wearing me down. God knows how much the tumors has grown and how bad my system has deteriorated during that two and a half months. On the hind sight, my hospitalization in January leading to the decision of giving up chemo might have actually saved my life. Someone up there must be watching me.

We welcome the good news. In the mean time, I continue to build up my energy level. My daily walking distance has increased from about 0.25 miles in February to more than 1.7 miles today and it will keep going up. Also, I am trying a "self-rescue" exercise. After all, the medicine will stop working one day and the only reliable defense is my own immune system.



Kaobunga!

May 8
2008

Right Direction

A message from Dad at 9:22pm.



During the clinic visit last week, my doctor brought in the report of my CT scan done on 4/21. Unlike the previous reports, this one was only 1 page plus 2 lines long. It got to be either very good or very bad, i.e. not much to be mentioned, I thought. My doctor read the impression first:

CT chest:

Stable appearance of the chest with persistent interstitial infiltrative changes suggesting infection or inflammation. Interstitial tumor cannot be excluded

CT abdomen and pelvis:

1. Interval decrease in size of the liver lesions when compared to the prior examination (the one done on Mar. 18). No new lesions are seen.
2. Bony metastatic disease that appears similar to the prior study. The exam is otherwise stable. So, that's good news, I think, and my doctor agreed. Finally a victory, small but real, can be claimed. The future appears to be brighter, compared to about a month ago.

This is a shot in the arm. Whatever we are doing now is working, although the war is not over yet. Next week we are heading to Atlanta to attend the Zijiu (self rescue) Institute where numerous cancer patients have turned from a hopeless nightmare to a healthy new life. I'm looking at this as my last resource because the western medicine has nothing to offer beyond Tarceva. The medicine would buy me enough time to get through the training. Now I start to see lights from the other end of the tunnel. In the mean time, the war goes on.



Kaobunga!

Jun 8
2008

Life at Atlanta – Part I

A message from Dad at 9:18am.



We have been in Atlanta for two weeks. It's about time to tell my friends how am I doing.

Life at Atlanta is pretty easy. My daily activities are eat, sleep, exercise, and practice the Ziju (save yourself) method. In the morning, we do a little exercise and go back to bed.

After lunch is a practice session followed by a nap. After dinner, everybody gets together sharing what we have learned. Then we go to the institute to warm up. Around 10 PM, the serious practice begins. Here I sleep 9 hours, on average, a day, something I haven't had since my childhood.

Before I get into details, let's switch gear and talk about an article my brother sent me long time ago. The title of the article is "Why cancer is called terminal disease?" This is an article written by the friend of a cancer patient who saw Dr. Lu of McKay Hospital at Taipei many years ago. After examination, the patient was told that he had cancer which was incurable. Dr. Lu explained that in modern medicine, there were only two ways to deal with cancer. One was to remove the cancer cells either by surgical procedures or chemical therapy and the other was to block the growth of cancer cells. The first way would fail because there was no guarantee that cancer cells could be completely removed or killed and, in the mean time, healthy cells were also killed because the chemicals did not distinguish the good cells from cancer cells, not to mention that cancer cells could become drug-resistant quickly. The second way would fail because cancer cells could build their own blood vessels and stole nutrient from good cells. It ended up starving the good cells while cancer cells were growing.

"Does this mean cancer is absolutely hopeless?", the patient asked. "No." says Dr. Lu. "Nature has paved the third path for us to cure cancer." For more than 600 cancer cases Dr. Lu has involved, he found that 85% of the patients' blood was acidic. "The normal pH range of human's blood is between 7.2 and 7.4. Cancer cells can't survive if pH is 7.4 and above." Since this was just a personal observation from unpublished clinic records, Dr. Lu couldn't say anything more. However, the patient took that advice to heart and moved to a mountain area, away from cities, and began helping local tribe people and had an easy life. He lived 40 years after the diagnosis without having any treatment or a single pill.

My friends, you and I can list hundreds of causes to make blood acidic. Today 1 out of 3.5 people will die of cancer. We shall blame nobody but ourselves. The only way to conquer cancer is to follow the path prepared



Kaoabunga!

for us by the nature. In part II, I'll talk about what I have learned here at Atlanta and the ways to return to nature.



Kaobunga!

Jun 21
2008

Life at Atlanta – Part II

A message from Dad at 7:31pm.



The method we practice at Atlanta is called “Zijiu”, meaning save oneself, method. It is composed of a mental part and a physical part. The physical part contains, for beginners, only one posture. All one needs to do is to open up a stand of the shoulder width, bend the legs so the thighs are 45 to 60 degrees with respect to the ground and the knees are right over the toes, keep the upper body straight with the tongue touching the rear of upper teeth and eyes looking down and closed, put up the hands like praying, with the arms parallel to the ground, the thumbs 90 degrees with the remaining fingers at about the nose height and 6 to 8 inches away from the face. Sounds easy, right? Now suck in the lower belly to the extent that you feel the front skin almost reaches your butt, and tense up both arms with loose shoulders and the two hands touching but not squeezing each other. Finally, try to maintain this posture for at least two hours.

So, the physical part is tough. The mental part must be relaxing to balance off, right? Wrong again. The master says in his book that every cancer patient has the so-called “cancer personality” and the emotion plays a big role in the formation of the disease. As I read on, a chill came up through my spine. In order to defeat cancer, one must find the personality causing the disease and get rid of it. So everyone is busy dissecting himself/herself. Every day we have to practice doing away from that personality and add a few positive thoughts. Sounds easy, right? Just think about changing something you are accustomed to, perhaps a habit, unique behavior, belief or ways to do things in your whole life.

I’m not going to pretend that I understand the theory behind the method completely. But a few things do make a lot of sense. As we are aging, the internal organs do not get lots of exercise. The muscles gradually lose their strength and flexibility. Therefore, some organs would drop out of their original positions. Blood circulation would slow down in those areas and bad things will deposit at somewhere they are not belong to. As the bad things accumulate with time, the probability that one gets disease increases. The posture helps push the organs back to the correct positions. By sucking in and holding the lower belly, the organs in the middle area are pushed upwards. Holding the posture forces one to open up the lungs to breathe. Therefore, all the internal organs are exercising. For the two weeks at Atlanta, I didn’t lose a single pound but my waistline was reduced by at least 1 and 1/2 inches. My middle became flat and I could do sit-ups, something I lost in the past five years or so. While the effectiveness of this method toward cancer is yet to be proved, I am enjoying these unexpected beneficial side effects for now.



Kasabunga!

In the next part, I will try to explain the theory behind this method and how can the incurable disease be defeated with such a simple approach.



Kaobunga!

Jul 22
2008

Updated CT Scan

A message from Dad at 10:26am.



We came back from Atlanta on June 10 due to the surprised sewer backup in Milwaukee. On June 23, I went through another CT scan which was scheduled about two months ago. During the clinic visit on June 30, we received the report, again, a boring one. At this stage, a boring report is better than anything else.

The results of scan of the chest basically showed nothing new and essentially stable appearance. CT scan of the abdomen and pelvis demonstrates improvement of the size of several liver lesions seen previously, one involving the medial aspect of the left lobe of the liver which now measures approximately 1 cm as compared to up to 1.5 cm on the prior study. A stable-appearing cyst is seen involving the lateral aspect of the left lobe of the liver. There is a lesion seen near the caudate lobe which has nearly disappeared on the current study which measured 1.0 cm in size as compared to about 3-4 mm on the current study. Nothing else is remarkable.

Of course this is good news. One minor problem, though, is the cited size. Below is from the April 21 CT scan report.

CT abdomen and pelvis: There are multiple lesions in the liver with peripheral enhancement and several with the suggestion of central necrosis. These appear decreased in size when compared to the prior exam. The largest lesion is in the medial segment of the left lobe measuring approximately 3.2 x 3.0 cm on the current study and 4.2 x 3.5 cm on the prior study. Multiple smaller lesions are decreased in size as well. Nowhere are the 1.5 cm and 1.0 cm ones mentioned. This makes you wonder if the doctor was looking at the same film or using the same ruler.

Well, I'm not going to worry about those minor details. The bottom line is that the tumors are disappearing. Whatever we are doing is right and we need to continue persistently. So, I thought I share this good news with all my friends. It's not too far away from the end of the tunnel and I'm doing just fine. We are back to Atlanta now and I am very focused on the work here. I am confident that to defeat this once declared incurable disease is no longer a question of whether it can be done but when can it be done.



Kaobunga!

Sep 2
2008

Life at Atlanta – Part III.

A message from Dad at 5:41pm.



In the concept of Chinese medicine, life has two forms, the spiritual form and the physical form. The activity of spiritual part is exhibited through the physical part. Without the spiritual part, the physical part of life can not act by itself. After birth the spiritual form of life, which has the self-healing capability, stops growing while the physical form continues to grow until mature. In other words, while the physical form can be repaired and regained, the spiritual form is gradually used and can not be regained unless one knows the method. Once the spiritual form is exhausted, life ends. The driving force of the spiritual life is called "chi". A similar word is used to describe gas. "Chi" exists in the universe. One can feel it but nobody knows its actual form. Life exists between the inhalation and exhalation, i.e. when one can still breathe, one form of "chi", not necessarily just oxygen. If the flow of oxygen stops, life functions can't continue for long. If the "chi" is weakened because of stress, fluctuation of the mood, and doing beyond one's capability, the spiritual life is used. The more spiritual form of life is used, the less ability is the body's defense system. Among the factors consuming the spiritual form of life, the fluctuation of the mood plays the most important role. If the range of fluctuation goes beyond what the body can tolerate, internal organs get damaged and weakened. Then disease will follow and attack the damaged organ.

In theory, there are seven different moods which directly affect the health of the five major organs, which govern life, and their corresponding parts in the digestion system, which support life. Too much pleasure hurts heart. You must have heard the story that people had heart attack after winning a lottery. Heart governs distribution of blood, speech, taste and respiration. Conditions of the heart affect the small intestine. So, people who are easy to get excited may have a weaker heart, more circulation problems, less ability of the small intestine to absorb nutrients and problem to deliver the nutrient. The body opening which reflects the conditions of heart is tongue. Discolored and/or rough tongue usually indicate a weakened heart. Athletes who do not perspire well usually have a weak heart or lungs (see below).

Anger hurts liver, which in terms affect the function of gall. Liver stores and regulates blood, decomposes toxins and governs tendon which connects bone and muscle for body's physical motion. The bile released by gall helps digestion. So, angry people tend to have less ability to regulate blood circulation and digest food. The conditions of liver are shown through its opening, the eyes. Strong liver leads to bright and shining eyes. On the other hand, teary and slow eyes can mean poor liver functions. Functions of liver also show through the nails, the extension of tendon. Dull and fragile nails usual show poor liver functions.



Kasabunga!

Sadness and anxiety hurt lungs and function of the large intestine. People known to have better ability to "handle" pressure, if not let go soon, can cause damage in lungs in the long run. Lungs govern the "chi" or in simple form the respiration, perspiration, skin and regulation of upper body water. The opening reflecting the conditions of lungs is nose and the gateway of lungs is throat. The representer of lungs is the skin. Long and deep breath, shining skin usually indicate strong lungs. Dry, blocking, or bleeding nose, easily infected throat are some warning signs of weakened lungs. Long term diarrhoea and constipation are also signs of weakened lungs, shown through its corresponding part of the digesting system.

Annoyance and/or too much concerns hurt spleen and the corresponding stomach. Spleen's main functions include digestion, absorption, delivery and storage of carbohydrates, absorption of water, synthesis of proteins, and regulate channels of blood circulations. It also plays a role in the nerve system, the incretion system and the immune system. It governs the limbs, muscles and release of flavor. The opening of spleen is mouth. The representer is the lips. These are in the upper end of the digest system. Bad breath, digestion problems, less ability to move, cold hands and feet are some signs of weakened spleen.

Frightening and fear hurt kidneys. Kidneys govern the growth, reproduction, and energy of the body. Its functions, corresponding to the function of lungs in the upper body, includes regulation of lower body water. If kidneys can't disperse the liquid through its corresponding part, i.e. bladder, the lower parts of body, particularly the legs, swell. Kidneys controls bones and marrow, and are represented by hair. The openings of kidneys are ears. The extension of bones are teeth. As we become older, the functions of kidneys decay, and the results show up as loose teeth, less hearing ability, less energy, gray hair, etc.

Understanding the relationship between mood and the health of the five life-controlling major organs is just the beginning of the recovery process. One has to dissect himself/herself to find out the flaws in his/her personality which lead to mood fluctuation and cause the disease. Then he/she has to make changes to get rid of the flaws. Otherwise, the disease will never go away. For some people, to touch the heart and speak out is very difficult. Unfortunately, without honestly facing himself/herself and making corrections, the best one can get is extension of the fighting process, not cure and recovery. It takes faith, courage, hard works and persistency to get through the recovery, or to be exactly, the reborn process. Not every one can do that. Stay tuned.



Kaobunga!

Sep 22
2008

Life at Atlanta – Part IV

A message from Dad at 8:45am.



Enough for the theory about the Ziju method, now let me talk about myself. My daily life here looks like this: wake up at about 8 or 9 AM for breakfast and then back to bed for 1 or 2 more hours if there is no other activity. Then do some reading or record the progress of practice for self evaluation. Then we will take a walk for about a mile on the Yellow River campus of the institute before lunch. After lunch, more reading and personal business before the afternoon nap for 1 to 2 hours. This usually takes us to about 5 PM. Then do a little exercise, have dinner around 7 and prepare for the workout.

We typically arrive at the campus around 8:30 and prepare for the class. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays we have general group discussion. Everyone share with their experience, difficulties and problems and we'll discuss and try to resolve them. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they will show tapes of previous teachings or Master's Q&A sessions. The content typically covers the health issues and their relationship with one's personality and daily life, and how to be a "good and healthy" person – not just consciously but subconsciously. Saturday nights are reserved for Master's Q&A. On Sunday nights, there is a special small group discussion for cancer patients. We talk about any special needs, share successful stories, and cheer for each other. The survivors also share with us their experience and point out ways to success. Every Thursday afternoon there is a group discussion about the theory of the Ziju method and chinese medicine. The class typically ends at 9:30 and then we move to the Yellow River campus for warmups and the workout. After 10, the workout begins. All these teachings are free of charge.

I belong to the so-called "the 4-hour club" which currently has 8 members. This group is composed of the most serious cancer patients – not just in physical conditions but also the will to get better, where the demands for quality and quantity (i.e. time) are the highest. We practice for 4 hours. The less serious group, with some survivors, practice for 3 hours. For the rest, including some survivors, healthy people, patients' families, etc, practice for 2 hours or less. We typically arrive home around 2:30 in the morning, hit the bed and pass out.

I have made progress steadily. When we got here in May, they described me as a "numb" person with a sad face, dull eyes and low voice (hard to be heard), no smile, and walking with difficulty. In July, I was able to get through my daughter's wedding. Now my eyes are twinkling again and my face is turning normal with more shining dark hair on my head. My vocal cord which was damaged during the second chemo therapy is half recovered. I'm able to sing again, although still with some difficulty in high notes. Now I can sing for more than 10 seconds continuously with one breathe,



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compared to about 24 seconds before I got sick. And I don't have to yell to be heard. This is a huge step.

A mid-forty lady known as the "big sister", who was one of the Master's first students, occasionally will show up and cheer for us. She is a very nice looking lady, full of energy and always wearing a smile. She, looks like in early 30's, is a general manager of a local company and have been with Master for 11 years. According to her, she follows Master not because she has had any disease but is pursuing a healthy life. Since she started, she discovered, through pains, many little problems in her body. As she progressed, these problems went away one by one and she became a healthy person, not just in body but also in heart. Since then, she has never seen a doctor or taken any pill. She is our role model.

Yellow River campus is a very beautiful place. In front of the practice rooms, there is a brook. Sometimes a crane and some ducks will stop by and several turtles will climb up a rock to enjoy sunshine. Shu and I often sit on a flat rock at the shore to enjoy the peace and the beauty of nature. I took some pictures. Posted here are the scene of the brook, the room we practice Ziju and one of our recent pictures taken by the swimming pool on the campus. My next CT is scheduled on 9/25. This will be the examine of my efforts. Stay tuned.



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Dec 10
2008

Life at Atlanta – Part V

A message from Dad at 9:11am.



The results of recent CT scan weren't as expected. While my lungs appeared clean, couple tumors in liver were growing back fast and a few suspected new ones might have developed. We reviewed my life style and effectiveness of the work out in the past three months and several deficiencies in areas of personality change and work out techniques were found. First, my life style hasn't changed much and I still have problems controlling my temper and anxiety. During work out, my span of focus was short and the efficiency of cumulating energy was insufficient, partly because my ability to maintain motionless for a long time was low perhaps due to my hand tremor, insufficient strength of my muscle and will. Correction plans have been made.

This is a tough lesson learned and the timing isn't good. While the correction action is taking its time, here comes the winter, meaning uphill battle until next spring. However, I have to keep moving forward. This time there is no room for error. I hope that everything works out fine and I can have better news to share next spring.



Kaobunga!

Feb 21
2009

Life at Atlanta – Part VI

A message from Dad at 12:19pm.



Owing to the fast growing of tumors, my doctor suggested another chemo treatment with Alimta. The drug, according to the studies, appeared to be a correct choice and was tolerable by most people. Considering for temporary damage control while I was doing other adjustments, we rolled the dice and accepted the doctor's suggestion. The first shot was on 12/16/08. Within 3 days, I started to have skin reactions, lower chest pain and suspicious low grade temperature. Thinking of possible side effects, I ignored the symptoms and continued my practice of Ziju, hoping to get used to within couple weeks. In the mean time, my skin was getting so itchy that started to affect my concentration and practice time.

Three weeks later, just when I was about to get used to these effects, the scheduled second shot came on 1/6/09. On 1/10/09, I ended up in an ER because of severe chest pain. They took X-ray, ultrasound and CT, and found the tumors were even bigger than before, suggesting Alimta was doing nothing but destroying my body. They gave me pain killer, prescribed me Hydromorphon and sent me home. Before I went home, however, there was a low grade fever developing. I continued to practice Ziju with pain, but I could feel that my strength was no longer the same. For about a week, the pain reached to a level that made my body shake during Ziju practice. So I decided to take Hydromorphon for relief. Within minutes I felt warm and here came the low grade fever again. I finally understood where the temperature came from when I left the ER on 1/10/09. They did give me Hydromorphon through IV before sending me home.

The low grade fever was lingering around for about three weeks. In mid-February, the left-over side effects of Alimta and Hydromorphon were finally disappearing but they already put me in a deeper hole with less body energy and strength. A reasonable decision turned out to be a big mistake and I paid big price for a very tough lesson. Now I have to face a bigger slope with less energy and strength.

P.S. We have decided to go back home. That puts an end to this post.



Kaobunga!

Mar 16
2009

An Update from Milwaukee

A message from Yvonne at 10:37am.



Hi all,

I was hoping my dad would give you an update himself, but that looks unlikely at this point. I know some of you rely mainly on this page for updates.

My parents left Atlanta four days after my dad's last post, arriving home late on February 26. The following Monday they visited their local oncologist who said that my dad's liver function was insufficient to sustain any more treatment and suggested hospice. My dad was enrolled in hospice the following day.

Since then, dad has declined steadily. Hospice has been wonderful, helping to keep his pain well managed and preparing us for what lies ahead. Our nurse gave us a copy of [Final Gifts](#), which we have all been reading.

Dad celebrated his 55th birthday yesterday. We had cake and balloons.

Based on my dad's physical and mental condition, our nurse estimated that we have maybe a week left.

Mar 17
2009

Dad: 3/15/54 – 3/17/2009

A message from Peter at 3:04pm.



Dad passed away shortly after 12 o'clock noon today.

He left very peacefully with the whole family gathered around. A service will be held on Saturday, March 21st at Zwaska Funeral Home on Bradley Rd in Milwaukee.

Thank you to everyone for your continued love and support. Dad was loved by many and will be greatly missed.



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**Mar 18
2009**

Funeral Service for Dad

A message from Yvonne at 11:20am.



The visitation will be at 9:30am-11:30am on Saturday, March 21, 2009 at Zwaska Funeral Home in Brown Deer. The funeral service will immediately follow at 11:30-12:30pm.

Zwaska Funeral Home is located at:

4900 West Bradley Road
Brown Deer, WI 53223

All are welcome to attend.

Thank you all for your support.

**Mar 19
2009**

Newspaper Death Notice

A message from Yvonne at 2:31pm.



Dad's obituary is in the Milwaukee Journal sentinel today. You can [view the online version here](#).



Kaobunga!

Mar 26
2009

Thank You, and Charities

A message from Yvonne at 10:11pm.



We would like to thank everyone who sent condolences, flowers, and gifts. We are in the process of writing proper thank you cards, but I wanted to let everyone know that we appreciate your support.

To reiterate what Peter said earlier, Dad was clearly loved by many and will be missed.

Several of you have asked if there were any charities you could donate to in Dad's memory. Here they are:

Tzu Chi Foundation

This is the Buddhist organization that led the funeral service. They do a lot of relief work all over the world.

- [Learn more about Tzu Chi](#)
- [Tzu Chi online donation page](#) (Google Checkout or Paypal)
- Donations can also be mailed to:

Tzu Chi Foundation, U.S.A.
1430 Plainfield Rd.
Darien, IL 60561

Global Resource for Advancing Cancer Education (GRACE)

GRACE was an enormously helpful resource for us as we learned about lung cancer and researched different treatment options for Dad. It's a relatively new foundation and could definitely use your support.

- [Learn more about GRACE](#)
- [GRACE online donation page](#) (Google Checkout)
- Donations can also be mailed to:

GRACE
4616 25th Ave. NE #300
Seattle, WA 98105

Wisconsin Parkinson Association

Many of you know that Dad also suffered from Manganism, a neurological disorder similar to Parkinson's Disease. He had actually been mis-diagnosed for many years, but Dr. Nausieda at the Wisconsin Parkinson Association made the correct diagnosis and began a treatment plan that improved Dad's quality of life greatly. We are very grateful to him and the Wisconsin Parkinson Association.

- [Learn about the Wisconsin Parkinson Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Parkinson Association online donation page](#)



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- Donations can also be mailed to:

Wisconsin Parkinson Association
945 North 12th Street, Suite 4602
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Thank you all again for your kindness and generosity.

May 25
2009

Updates

A message from Peter at 1:15pm.



It's been a crazy two months. Yvonne, Mom, and I went back to Taiwan in April and placed Dad in his final resting place. Mom stayed with Grandma and Grandpa until the middle of May and returned to the US on May 21st.

In the meantime, Peter finished thirteen performances of the musical, 42nd Street at the Waukesha Civic Theatre. The show turned out really well. It played to sold out crowds and quite a few standing ovations.