

Dear Dr. Friedman:

I will never forget the first time I met you in September 2003. Ramona, my friend, had driven me down from San Francisco that day and I saw you at the Charles Drew University. All we remember from that night is laughing so hard as Eric was trying to draw blood from me and upset with his San Francisco girlfriend that he had just broken up with. Then my chart got misplaced and we got locked out in the hallway with you and you remained so calm as we both sat down on the floor complaining of dizziness. You dictated my history without my chart and you remembered everything with your perfect, photographic memory like no other doctor has ever composed, leaving nothing out or incorrect. And then you so kindly drove us back to our hotel in Beverly Hills because you were driving by there on your way home and talking about your children. I knew then that I had found a man, a doctor, a genuine kind person who would finally help me get well. And here we are, 4 years later, me still weaning from steroids, with your knowledge and expertise never letting me down.

You have not only helped me but several of my friends that I have sent to you. Your kindness, honesty and wonderful knowledge as a person and the best doctor ever, are what has helped me get through this horrible disease. But knowing that I have you as my doctor, I know I will make it through this ordeal and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your help.

I also want to express my sincere condolences in the passing of your mom and please know that she is in my daily prayers.

Love,
Valerie P. Goodale

Dr. Friedman,

One of our fellow "maybe-I-have-Cushing's" patients on the boards asked whether or not it was "worth it" to visit you in LA. I did not have to hesitate in my answer and no one else did, either.

I told her:

"He's worth it. In addition to all of the earlier comments Dr. F. has been the first and ONLY doctor that has expressed empathy about that fact that I don't feel good, that getting the "run around" from other doctors isn't a good experience, all of that. While I don't have all of the answers about my illness yet, I believe that Dr. F. has done absolutely everything possible towards seeking those answers.

My first visit with Dr. F. erased 5 years of self-doubt and gave me the courage to keep looking for answers. The fact that his instinct is to BELIEVE patients gave me hope and has allowed me to share that hope with others."

Thanks to you and your staff for everything you do.

Best,
Kelly Ann Kuhn-Wallace

Dear Dr. Friedman,

Few doctors are like you. Most would look at the obvious while missing it, tend to dismiss abnormal over normal, blame the patient and if anything only try to treat the "after" effects while I think most of the patients are struggling with the "why" and trying to get to the real source. I want to thank you profoundly for helping me find the why.

I could never figure out why my body was going strange on me. Even after a local doctor gave me the name, he could not follow through. I don't know why doctors mistake personality for health. And still when I went home with pathology, I still have problems. Like I cannot exist still!

I send condolences for your time of loss. In your time of pain, a few of us patients decided we wanted to remind you of how much you meant to many of us. To me, my hormones make me more emotional than I would like to be and make it difficult to rationally and concisely get the point across as you need since you have so many patients - so I apologize and will make this short: You are very much appreciated. Thank you so much for you past and future help.

Regards,
Jennifer Schutte

Dear Dr. Friedman:

You have touched the lives of so many in such a humanitarian way. You have made history in your research and are the finest example of the way all doctors should be. Thank you for all that you do for your patients. May the mother of your heart live on through you and what you have accomplished in your life and in the lives of those you have touched.

With all my heart,
Diane Thompson

Dear Dr. Friedman,

Without you, I'd be dead by now. What on earth do I say to someone to whom I owe my life?

Thank you.

Lisa Kenefick & Family

*Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.
~ Emily Dickinson ~*

Dear Dr. Friedman,

To say thank you for your care and taking me on as a patient seems like such small words to truly encompass the gratitude for what your role has been in my diagnosis, my health, my LIFE!

I met you at a time when I felt the medical system was truly failing me and my family. We had been searching for answers and given band-aid diagnoses that never really gave me any relief. My "HOPE" of ever finding answers was slowly being snatched away every time I stepped into a physician's office and had my symptoms belittled. Not only were they failing me as a patient but also as another human being.

I came to you so weak that I couldn't even hold my 8 month old baby to feed him. You understood how devastating this was for me and said "We have to get you better." When you used the word "We" it was then I knew I had a physician that was in this thing with me. You restored my hope by letting me know that you believed in me, you listened to my concerns, and actually gave me faith in myself again.

Even though thank you is not enough I must tell you the gratitude I have for what you have done for me. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

You did more than diagnose me..... You gave me my health back! You gave my family their daughter, wife, and mother back! You gave me my belief in myself back! But most importantly you gave me HOPE back! You gave me "Hope" for the future and for all that I thank god for you!

I am eternally grateful for the devotion you have shown in treating me and other Cushing's Syndrome patients.

Please know that the unfaltering dedication you have shown for your work has benefited so many people and given them back their health and "Hope"!

Warmest Regards,
Dawn Collison

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning.
~ Albert Einstein~

Dear Dr. Friedman:

Through the years I have seen many doctors with my varied symptoms, each of which was treated like a separate issue rather than being put together as a whole. When I first heard about you, I was so frustrated and down because I knew something was wrong physically, but I couldn't get anyone to test and figure out what it was. I also knew it wasn't something new, but something that was getting much worse. The first thing I heard was "Go see Dr. Friedman. He'll listen to you." The magic word, "listen", was spoken. The second thing I heard was "He'll figure it out whatever it is. He'll do the right tests." Ah, there is another magic word, "test". Add the magic of "figure it out", and I was hooked.

Seriously, I know that there isn't magic involved, but you are a magical person to many of us because of who you are and what you do. I realize the hard work you do and extreme knowledge you possess are the real reasons for the success you have with the care you give. But neither of those is as fundamentally important as the caring you share when you listen and treat your patients as real people. The rarity of that is so prevalent with doctors today that it's a total shock when one meets you and realizes you are listening.

I want to say thank you. Thank you for standing up for what you believe, for being there for your patients, and for ultimately making waves with your research and treatment of patients. I believe you are one of the rare, truly great men in this world. And I believe your research is and will continue to be fundamental in the understanding of Cushing's. I know you are active with a lot of other endocrine disorders, but I only understand first-hand the value in respect to Cushing's. Therefore, I write from a personal viewpoint. It is my hope and prayer that you always get the support you need to continue with what you are doing.

By-the-way, I live in the Roanoke, Virginia area, and Virginia Tech is working along with Roanoke Memorial Hospital to build a medical school. It is going to be a research institution. Are you interested? We sure do need a good doctor in this area! Most of all, we need a good doctor who can train other good doctors. Our new doctors need guidance such as yours.

May you always be as blessed as all the blessings you bestow. You are the best.

With much respect,
Robin Smith

Dear Dr. Friedman,

I have told you that I feel you have saved my life, and how grateful I am for you, and that you are my hero. I worry that you don't hear these things enough and might not know how much you mean to those of us who you have helped. Please know you truly are counted as a blessing in my life and that I will never be able to express to you adequately how much your helping me means to me.

I think I started having Cushing's symptoms as long ago as 12 years ago. I wish I could tell you how many doctors I saw, and how many times they told me all my tests were "normal" and that I just needed some Prozac and a good weight loss program. I was constantly dieting, but it just didn't work anymore. Well, I WAS getting older, they'd chuckle. I had so many strange diagnoses that it was just insane, but no doctor really took me seriously until I saw you, nobody looked at "the big picture". You listened quietly, did the testing, and told me what you thought. And you didn't think I was just lazy, crazy and fat! I'd been seeing doctors for so long that I half expected you were going to tell me I was doing this to myself, even though I knew in my heart that I wasn't.

I would look in the mirror and not recognize the person there anymore. She didn't look like me, act like me, or even have the same personality that I knew was me. Where did I go? Would I ever come back? My life had totally changed, and I was mourning the loss of all the good things I thought were gone forever. Among those were my health and energy, my looks, running with my grandchildren, my social life, my romance with my husband...just all the good stuff!

A month ago, after almost a year of testing, I had my pituitary surgery with Dr. Jho and immediately I felt different. I was still in here! My husband also glimpsed me again and we were both amazed that this tiny tumor could have been what had been taking over my life and my health for so long. I have had some setbacks since then, and had to go on higher steroids and I disappeared again, but I know I am in here and will return as I recover. I will never be able to thank you enough for listening to me, for sharing your knowledge, and sending me on to surgery so that I can reclaim my life. The work you are doing is going to impact and save many lives and I admire so much that you also make time to see those of us who are lost, and falling through the cracks of the medical system.

Words can't express the gratitude I feel. Thank you so much.

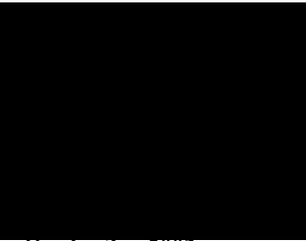
With deep affection,

Mary Loper

Central Lake, MI

Dear Dr. Friedman,

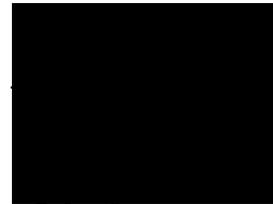
I wanted to write this letter to show my heartfelt appreciation for all of the hard work you have done for me and rest of your patients over the years.



Graduation 2003

I first came to see you when my life seemed to be falling apart around me. Everything I thought I was and was going to become had come crumbling down. I had recently graduated from the University of Colorado with a BA in Psychology. I started my first “grown-up” job as the Youth Advocate for a domestic abuse shelter in the Florida Keys. My dream was to get some work experience and then return to academia to begin a doctoral program in Child Psychology. Soon after I started my new job in paradise, I started gaining weight. At first I attributed this to the stresses accompanying my new job. But very quickly a 15lb. weight gained turned into almost 100lbs. My family, upon visiting me for the holidays, was in total shock about the changes that had happened to me in just a few short months. I felt ashamed and embarrassed.

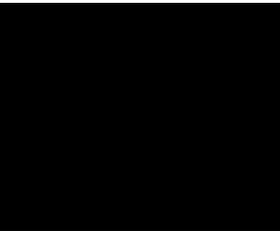
Along with the extreme weight gain came missed periods, depression, and social isolation. It seemed like something was terribly wrong and I went to several local doctors who were very disinterested in the problems I was facing. Out of desperation, I turned to the Internet to research the symptoms I was dealing with. I stumbled upon a website called Cushings-Help.com. I was astonished to realize that there was a huge group of people that had all of the same symptoms. Many of them were talking about this wonderful doctor in Los Angeles and how he was the only one able to help them. They called you the “wizard” and suggested that I follow the yellow brick road all of the way from Florida to California to your office on Wilshire Blvd. I must admit that I was quite hesitant at first and couldn’t understand why all of these people were traveling across the country to see you, but I decided that it was worth taking that chance for my health. I was so glad that I did!



Before Surgery

this

From the moment that I walked into your office you were certain that I had Cushing’s. You showed confidence in me, and all of the problems that I was expressing, when other doctors and even my own family had not. You took the time to listen to me and took on the challenge of helping me figure out what was happening. Your kindness, skill, and wisdom during this difficult point in my life has meant the world to me. Since my surgery in September, I have been feeling better. Although I know that I still have a long road ahead, it is reassuring to know that I have a capable and caring doctor to work with me throughout this journey towards recovery.



You have shown unending patience and compassion for patients with very complicated problems. You have given up your weekends and family time for emails, phone appointments, and emergency calls. You have displayed great courage by challenging the conventional wisdom about this disease. Your efforts have been tireless in taking on patients, teaching, and advancing research in the field.

May you be blessed for your dedication to helping me and other Cushing’s patients across the country.

Sincerely, Natalie Kinney

1February 9, 2007

Dear Dr. Friedman,

I can't thank you enough for coming back to the office that night for my 1st appointment.

Prior to that I had been to two Mayo Clinics, and a University Pituitary Center without getting close to the proper diagnosis. Of course they were able to provide pieces to the puzzle, but nothing that actually helped me. I literally spent my last dollar on you and it was the best dollar I've spent yet. Not to mention Dr Z was a source of entertainment and comfort all on his own.

Staring down so many experts and telling them they were either wrong or missing something is the most difficult thing I've ever done. It's a piece of cake to fight for someone else, but to fight for yourself when your body and mind are not well, is a completely different playing field.

My parents were terrified that I would die before someone figured out what was wrong with me. I am certain that without being treated & educated about adrenal insufficiency, I would have likely died during a minor medical procedure or surgery given the serious AI events I've recently had while being treated correctly.

I, and everyone who loves me, wants to express our gratitude for your willingness to see patients when we know your other responsibilities are lofty. Your gifts and talents are having a remarkable impact on so many people due to the men and women being taught under your supervision and the importance research you're doing. Yet, you still make time to heal the medical zebras. Your name is spoken with awe and gratitude in my house.

After my 1st appointment with you, my Dad called anxiously waiting to hear if "this" doctor was going to be the one who could help me. I told him, "don't worry Dad, this guy is a genius AND has heart. I didn't have to play dumb or steer him in the right direction....he is seriously bright! I have a feeling his brain is to medicine what Lance Armstrong's lungs are to athleticism."

Thank you so much for what you've already been able to do for me and for your commitment to see my health restored. Remember our stories and faces when you're discouraged or think you're spread so thin you're not doing anything well. It's not possible to be contributing to so much positive change without facing challenges and frustrations. I've come to learn that many times it's the best indicator that I'm heading in the right direction. During those times, look up and see beyond the challenges because each life that you are touching is causing a ripple effect that goes beyond what you will see in this life.

Psalm 73:26 - *"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."*

Sincerely,

Gina Graf

February 10, 2007

Dear Dr. Friedman,

I am so sorry to hear about your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time. There are no words I can say to make your grief disappear, but may you find peace in the happy memories you keep of your loved one.

Many of your devoted patients thought it would be a nice gesture to share some of our gratitude and appreciation of your devotion to patients with Cushing's. After my first appointment with you just a few weeks ago, I felt like someone was finally looking at the whole picture, not just each separate problem, which I know are undoubtedly tied together. When you asked me why I came to see you and I told you to see if I had Cushing's, I felt like for the first time, a physician believed in the possibility, and was truly willing to do whatever it takes to confirm a diagnosis. Even though, we have had only one meeting, I feel I have hope again and am looking forward to a future without being ill. So far, that has been your gift to me.

Now, it is time to return my appreciation to your willingness to commit to each patient you evaluate. I hope you will accept this gift from those of us who appreciate your willingness to help us when others have failed. I look forward now to finding a solution, and am ready to fight the battle with your help and guidance.

My deepest sympathy,

Larissa L. Coyle

Larissa Coyle
Your first patient from West Virginia!