



CHOOSING *Resilience & Hope*

Quotes, affirmations, and
phrases to offer support in
challenging times.





About Us

Scleroderma (AKA Systemic Sclerosis) is a rare, progressive, autoimmune disease that causes the body's connective tissue to harden and shorten.

The word Scleroderma has Greek origins. "Sclero" means hard and "Derma" means skin. Although the hardening or thickening of the skin is the most visible manifestation of the disease, it can and often does affect other body systems, including the lungs, heart, kidneys, gastrointestinal, neurological, and musculoskeletal systems.

There is no cure for Scleroderma, but there are medications that are used to treat the symptoms and slow the progression.

The National Scleroderma Foundation's mission is to advance medical research, promote disease awareness, and provide support and education to Scleroderma patients, their caregivers and support systems.

The Upper Great Lakes Chapter proudly serves Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin.



About this Resource

We asked our Scleroderma community members, friends, and family to help us spread awareness about the importance of Mental Health wellness by sharing their favorite phrases, quotes, verses and affirmations that help them through challenging times.

This journal is a compilation of those submissions. As well as some tips and guides to put our thoughts into practice.

It is an expression of courage, built on the foundation of love, hope and resilience.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this work. And for everyone who is taking the time to read it. We hope that it will serve as a valuable resource in your mental wellness toolbox.

It is a testament to the fact that we are better together...stronger together... and that we are never alone.



"The mountain peaks are
calling me, I have to go,
I have to see!"
Kim B. - Cedarburg, WI



"I can do all things, though
Christ who strengthens me."
Phil 4:13

Joann V. - Fond du lac, WI



"Finish each day and be done with it. You
have done what you could. Some blunders
and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget
them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a
new day. You shall begin it serenely and
with too high a spirit to be encumbered
with your old nonsense."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson
Anne Y.M. - Manitowoc, WI



"Don't let the frustration and disappointment from the stuff that isn't going well steal the joy from the things that are."
Camille N. - Mishicot, WI

The God of My Understanding
will never put me in a situation
or struggle that is beyond my
capacity to complete.
Cynthia W. - Sheboygan, WI



Do your best every day, but
remember your best is going
to look different every day.
Sara S. - Grand Ledge, Michigan



"Inspiring the mind enriches the heart and soul."

Angelica D. - Staten Island, NY

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Anita G. - Covington, LA



Always remember to share a smile with everyone you meet. You never know who really needs it as it might be the only one that they see that day, and it might make a difference in life and death.

Sherri O. - Germantown, WI



Self Care Reinforces Mental Health Wellness

WHAT IS SELF CARE?

Self-care is when we take time to do things that help us improve our mental and physical health.



WHY IS SELF CARE IMPORTANT?

Engaging in self-care activities helps us manage our energy, decrease stress and anxiety levels and improve our self-image.



While big goals can be effective in steering you towards a self-care practice, it can be just as important and often more approachable to find small ways to take care of yourself everyday.



Examples of Self-Care Activities

- Get out in nature
- Eat a healthy meal
- Practice breath-work
- Give yourself grace
- Treat yourself to something you love
- Reframe a negative thought.
- Take a break from social media
- Stretch/move your body



Self-care is every decision you make.

Tamara B. - San Jose, California



"Fake it until you Feel it". This one has kept me going for over 30 years with scleroderma.

Barbara Jo H. - Des Moines, IA

Worrying is like rocking in a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but you don't get anywhere.

Kathy I. - Leesburg, FL

"This too shall pass."
Meg F.V. - Des Moines, IA



There is a crack in everything,
that's how the light gets in.
Gail K. - Hubertus, WI

"Be kinder than necessary, for
everyone you meet is fighting
some kind of battle." By T.H.
Thompson and John Watson
Brenda B.W. - Milwaukee, WI



Revel in the spirit & beauty of nature. It is
a constant energy that surrounds &
envelops us in her majesty every day.
Cynthia G. - Madison, AL



"Every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it bears more fruit." John 15:2
Dawn S. - Mukwonago, WI



This quote has sustained me as a woman, a mom and a preschool teacher...."Every minute is a fresh start."
Kathy L.W. - Roswell, GA

I get knocked down, but I get up again. Ain't nothing gonna keep me down.
Barbara Jo H. - Des Moines, IA

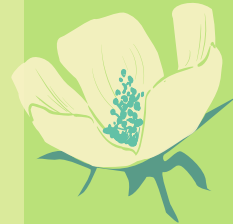


Therapy Works!
Meg F.V. - Des Moines, IA

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalms

23:1-6 NIV

Sharon L. - Colplay, PA



"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory."

-Dr. Seuss

Cynthia T. - Cortez, Colorado

Believe that you are healing,
image that slowly you are
walking pain free , breathing
and eating without sickness and
I will never stop believing that I
will heal and take my life back.
Lucy W. - Sydney, Australia



"We never know how far reaching
something we may think, say or do
today will affect the lives of millions
tomorrow." B. J. Palmer
Kathleen G.B. - Shelby Township, MI



"You are the sky. Everything else is just the
weather." Pema Chodron
Evamarie G.B. - New York, NY

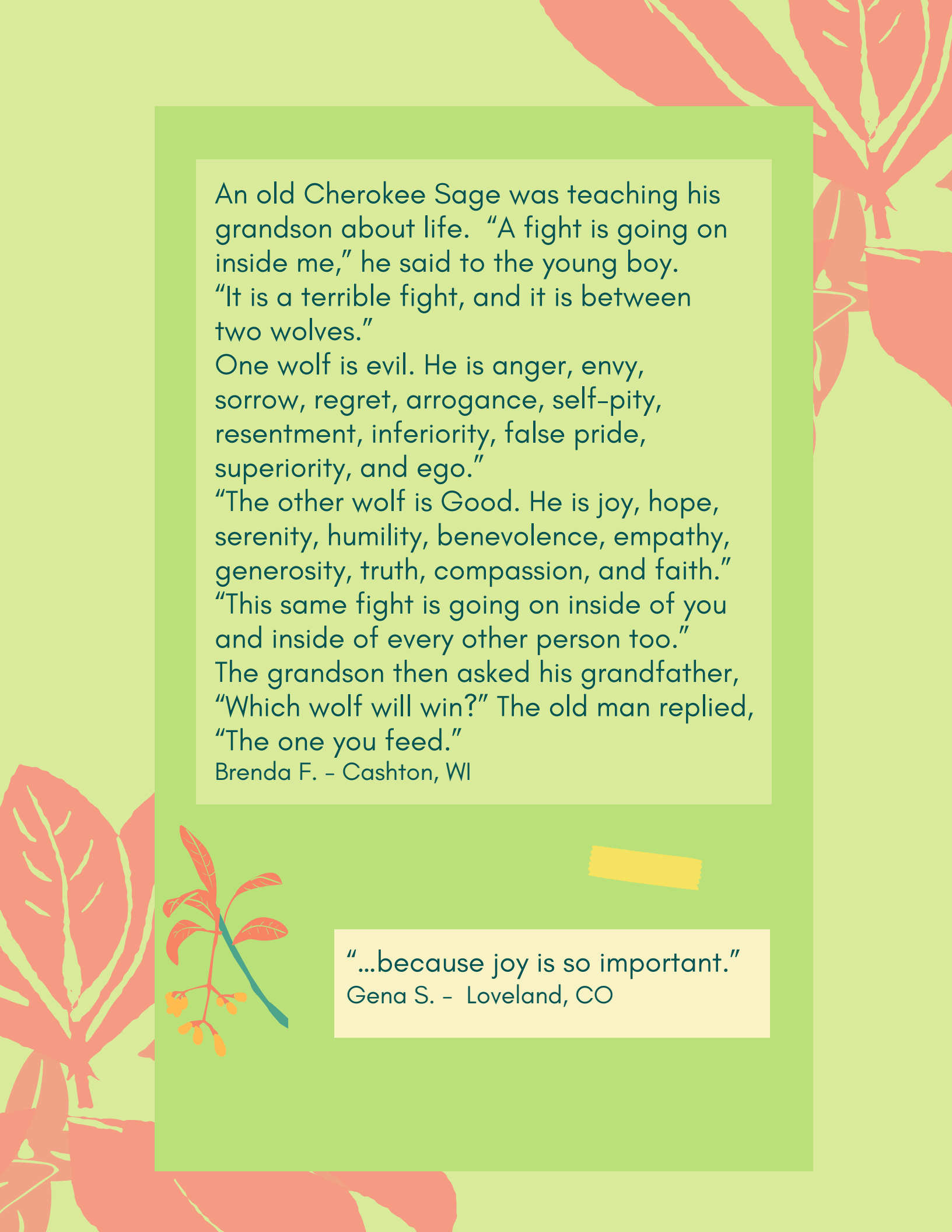
Tips for Choosing *Hope and Resilience*

- Spring clean the mind by creating a list of things causing brain clutter and create a plan to accomplish them
- Go for a walk and spend 10 minutes focusing on mindfulness without multitasking
- Spending time with a significant other or friend unplugged
- Perform a random act of kindness
- Mindfully replace a negative thought with a positive one
- Spend time enjoying the outdoors
- Do something you've been wanting to do and enjoy every moment

Source:

<https://thelittlefitpuppydoc.com/index.php/2019/05/01/mindful-may/>





An old Cherokee Sage was teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the young boy. "It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves."

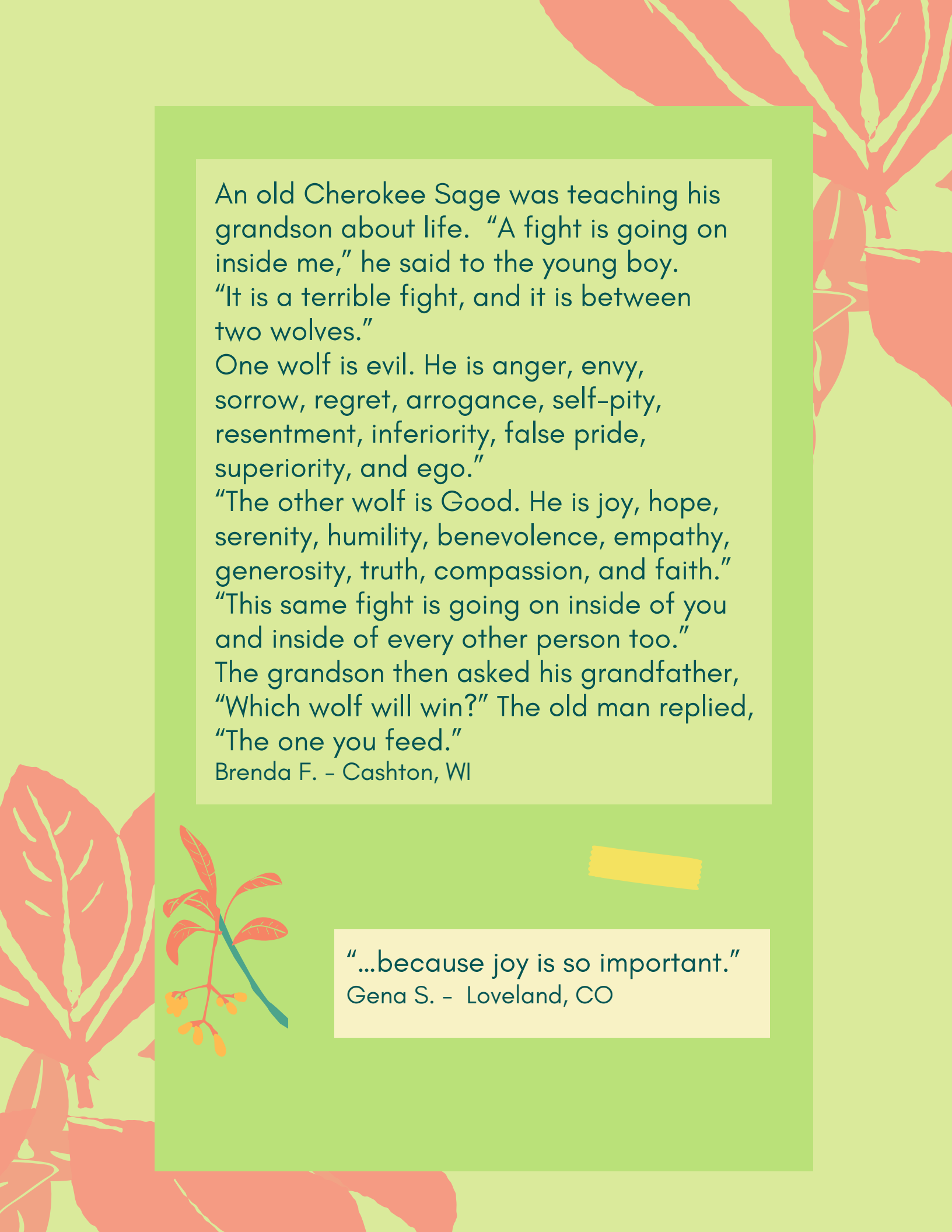
One wolf is evil. He is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, arrogance, self-pity, resentment, inferiority, false pride, superiority, and ego."

"The other wolf is Good. He is joy, hope, serenity, humility, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

"This same fight is going on inside of you and inside of every other person too."

The grandson then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?" The old man replied, "The one you feed."

Brenda F. - Cashton, WI



"...because joy is so important."
Gena S. - Loveland, CO



"And when you get the choice
to sit it out or dance...I HOPE
YOU DANCE" Lee Ann Womack
Sue S.D. - Brighton, MI

"You are not healing to be able
to handle the trauma; you are
used to the trauma. You are
healing to be able to handle the
joy!" - @vanessaandheriphone
Terri B. - Green Bay, WI



Tension is who you think you should be.
Relaxation is who you are.
Rachel L. - Park City, UT

Meditative Breathing **to Calm Anxiety and Stress**

Meditation can sometimes feel difficult or intimidating, but it doesn't need to be.

The benefits of meditation can include reducing stress and anxiety; helping us be more present, and help us to become less emotionally reactive.

(<https://www.manhattancbt.com/goal-of-meditation/>)

Not sure how to begin a meditation practice?
Try this simple 4-7-8 breathing technique
created by Dr. Andrew Weil

When first starting out, limit yourself to 4 cycles.
Then gradually increase to 8 full cycles.



"First, I must respect and take care of myself; second, when I see patients who are suffering severely to the point of difficulty breathing compared to the degree of my early illness, I pray and thank the Lord for diagnosing my illness early and taking the medicine in the beginning. Lastly, we must listen to the words and experiences of positive people.
Dendani A. - Algeria



"Trust the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." Prov. 3; 5-6
Sharon W.W. - Covington, LA

"The most important things in life are the connections you make with others."
- Tom Ford
Peggy C. - Dryden, MI

Journal Entry

Write a list of 10 things that always make you smile, no matter the circumstances.



"When the world pushes you to your knees, you're in the perfect position to pray." – Rumi
Jeanne B. – Carlisle, PA



"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. '" – Jeremiah 29:11
Alvin C. – Philippines



Though the road may seem rough, under God's grace and mercy the peace that surpasses all human understanding can make it seem just as smooth.
Tara T.D. – Pittsburgh, PA



"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." – Martin Luther King Jr.
Karie J. – Fort Atkinson, WI

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year."
– Ralph Waldo Emerson
Joan K.B. – Rowayton, CT



Think good thoughts, Say kind and encouraging words, Do good things. Do all three for yourself and others.
Kathleen G.B. – Shelby Township, MI

"2 Corinthians 12:7-10; The Message
Because of the extravagance of those
revelations, and so I wouldn't get a big
head, I was given the gift of a handicap to
keep me in constant touch with my
limitations. Satan's angel did his best to
get me down; what he in fact did was push
me to my knees. No danger then of walking
around high and mighty! At first, I didn't
think of it as a gift, and begged God to
remove it. Three times I did that, and then
he told me,

My grace is enough; it's all you need.
My strength comes into its own in your
weakness.



Once I heard that, I was glad to let it
happen. I quit focusing on the handicap
and began appreciating the gift. It was a
case of Christ's strength moving in on my
weakness. Now I take limitations in stride,
and with good cheer, these limitations that
cut me down to size—abuse, accidents,
opposition, bad breaks. I just let Christ take
over! And so the weaker I get, the stronger
I become."

Helene G. - Las Vegas, NV



We all need to take a moment to step back from our day to day responsibilities and examine how we are truly living. For if you are 'striving' and in the process doing harm to yourself, (health being one of many aspects) or anybody else for that matter – then you are far from 'thriving' in life.

Perry B. – Wellington, New Zealand



“There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. One is called yesterday and the other is called tomorrow, so today is the right day to love, believe, do, and mostly live.”

– Dalai Lama

Evamarie G.B. – New York, N

Living with chronic conditions is my social work superpower. It gives me an incredible amount of empathy and I literally can feel their pain.

Kenndy L. – Hibbing, MN

"You'll never believe what you can do
till you get in there and try it!"

Julie VC.K. - Cato, WI

Life, for me, is an ongoing lesson.
It isn't perfect. It ebbs and flows.
But every day, we get to try
again...Krw

Kim R.W. - Aurora, IL



"It's the small habits. How you spend your
mornings. How you talk to yourself. What
you read. What you watch. Who you share
your energy with. Who has access to you.
That will change your life." - Michael Tonge

Michelle C. - Denver, CO

Journal Entry



Sometimes our bodies don't work the way we wish it could. What if we reframed the way we view our bodies and focus on all the ways it's working to keep us alive and moving?

Start from the tips of your toes and move upward, pausing to express gratitude for each part of your body. Instead of focusing only on function, appreciate the stories and experiences each part holds.



It's either 1 step forward or two back;
or two steps forward and 1 back.
Either way, you're doing the Cha Cha,
so you might as well enjoy the dance.
Because this too shall pass!
Michael B. - Saint Louis, Michigan



"Be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid or terrified
because of them, for the Lord
your God goes with you; He will
never leave you or forsake you."

Deut. 31:6

Betty R. - Menomonee Falls, WI



"We must accept finite disappointment,
but never lose infinite hope."

- Martin Luther King Jr

Amy D. - Mequon, WI



"Our ultimate freedom is the right and power to decide how anybody or anything outside ourselves will affect us." – Stephen R. Covey

Julie VC.K. – Cato, WI



"Some allow their diagnosis to define them, falling victim to their disease and living at the mercy of what the doctors tell them. Then there are those who face their illness head-on, taking responsibility for their own healing and choosing to live a thriving life"

– Cami Walker

Ann M. – Plymouth, MN



"I may have Scleroderma, but it doesn't have me!"

Peggy C. – Dryden, MI

Just as we'd take care of any of our other physical health needs (organs; cancer; immuno-diseases & disorders, etc.), we should certainly take care of our Brains & Minds & Mental Health Wellness & Wellbeing. We should definitely not feel any apprehension nor negativity about doing so at all. In fact, sometimes just talking about things can help and make a positive difference.



Our brains control all of our other physical, physiological, mental, emotional, and other whole, full body functions. It's kind of like a car, if we don't take care of the vital parts of our engines, our cars won't function properly. That's just a very basic comparison.

I just hope & pray for and want others to know that there's no stigmas, nor any "shame" nor guilt about taking care of ourselves, especially our brains & minds, which are so critical & crucial for everything else with our whole bodies' health & wellness.

Michelle L. - Tampa Bay, FL



"You wake up every morning to fight
the same demons that left you so
tired the night before, and that, my
love, is bravery." – anonymous.

Amy D. – Mequon, WI



"Don't let anybody dim your light"

Lu R. (Sclerolu) –Boynton Beach, FL

Even in our darkest moments, there is
always something to be grateful for.

Brooke V. – DePere, WI



Hope Springs Eternal.

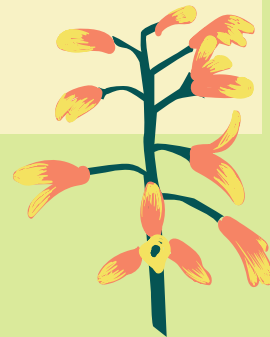
Shirley E. – Menomonee Falls, WI



"If the mountain seems too big today, then climb a hill instead. If the morning brings you sadness, it's okay to stay in bed. If the day ahead weighs heavy and your plans feel like a curse, there's no shame in rearranging; don't make yourself feel worse. If a shower stings like needles and a bath feels like you'll drown; if you haven't washed your hair for days don't throw away your crown. A day is not a lifetime, a rest is not defeat. Don't think of it as failure, just a quiet, kind retreat. It's okay to take a moment from an anxious, fractured mind. The world will not stop turning while you get realigned. The mountain will still be there when you want to try again. You can climb it in your own time. Just love yourself til then."

- Laura Ding-Edwards

Crissy H.C. - Oshkosh, WI



Strengths I've Gained Exercise

Each time we experience an obstacle in life it can teach us something. Training ourselves to see the light in dark times helps us build resilience. It's helpful to approach life with an adaptive attitude, where we can reframe negatives to positives, spot opportunities in disappointments, and find wisdom and strength during challenging times.

Use the following page to help you practice reframing the way you see challenges. So that no matter what you're facing, you know you have the tools inside you to keep moving forward.



Worksheet

Strengths I've Gained Worksheet

Life Challenge

Strengths I Gained



"Never let anyone or anything
steal your joy!"

Deborah G.C. - San Antonio, TX



I've learned that people will forget
what you said; people will forget
what you did; but people will never
forget how you made them feel.

Linda K. - Longmont, CO



The most important thing in life is to
be yourself. Unless you can be Batman.
Always be Batman!

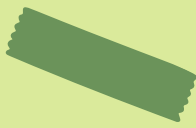
Sue S.D. - Brighton, MI





If opening your eyes, or getting out of bed,
or combing your hair is the daunting Mount
Everest you climb today, that is okay.

-Carmen Ambrosio
Amy D. - Mequon, WI



"Live like someone left the
gate open."

Tina S. - Manitowoc, WI



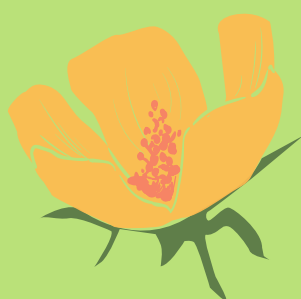
"When life gets you down do you wanna
know what you've gotta do?... Just keep
swimming. Just keep swimming. Just keep
swimming, swimming, swimming..."

- Dory from Finding Nemo
Monica H. - Manitowoc, WI

"For one human being to love another;
that is perhaps the most difficult of all
our tasks, the ultimate, the last test
and proof, the work for which all other
work is but preparation. I hold this to
be the highest task for a bond
between two people; that each
protects the solitude of the other. This
is the miracle that happens every time
to those who really love; the more
they give, the more they possess.

– Rainer Maria Rilke

Barbara B. – (Thriving with Scleroderma);
Haleiwa, HI



"Remember that the happiest people
are not those getting more, but those
giving more." – Jackson Brown

Brenda F. – Cashton, WI



"The Lord is my light and my
salvation, whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my
life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

– Psalm 27:1

Sharron M. – La Junta, Co

"Promise me you'll always remember:
You're braver than you believe, and
stronger than you seem, and smarter
than you think" – Christopher Robin
Shalana G. – Macungie, PA



"If we could look into each other's hearts
and understand the unique challenges
each of us faces, I think we would treat
each other much more gently, with more
love, patience, tolerance, and care."

– Marvin J. Ashton

Candy D. – Manitowoc, WI



You've survived 100% of your toughest days. I know it hasn't been easy. And I know it sometimes hasn't been pretty. But you've done it. Give yourself due credit for how far you've come. And most importantly, keep going...

DON'T GIVE UP!

Camille N. - Mishicot, WI



"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

- Maya Angelou, Letter to My Daughter
Alex B. - Arlington, VA

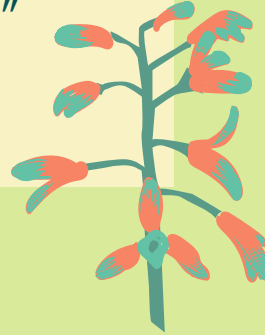


There's purpose in pain. No matter how deep it cuts, it's up to us to find it. If you look long enough, you'll find hope. -Krw
Kim R.W. - Aurora, IL

"You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you."

- Isaiah 26:3

Karen W. - Appleton, WI



"Take a moment today to be proud of
YOU. Proud of making it through tough
times you didn't think you could. Proud of
conquering battles you once doubted.

Most importantly, be proud of being
authentically you, growing closer to your
best self every day."

- Lia

Claudine S.M. - Reno, NV



Say what you mean, mean what you say...
but don't say it mean.

Rebecca C. - Orlando, FL

Where to Turn for Help

**IF YOU'RE IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS,
PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE TWO
NUMBERS BELOW**

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

CALL OR TEXT 988

SAMHSA'S NATIONAL HOTLINE

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

NATIONAL SCLERODERMA FOUNDATION CONTACTS

HOPELINE

(800) 722-HOPE (4673)

NSF WEBSITE

www.Scleroderma.org

UPPER GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

UGLchapter@scleroderma.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NATIONAL
SCLERODERMAFOUNDATIONMI](https://www.facebook.com/national-scleroderma-foundation-mi)

Peer Mentor Plus Program

The Upper Great Lakes Chapter is pleased to announce our Peer Mentor Plus Program.

Research shows that individuals diagnosed with scleroderma have better outcomes when they can talk to other patients and family members who have had the same or similar experiences.

Whether recently diagnosed or many years into your Scleroderma journey, peer mentors can create a safe place for patients to share their concerns, hopes, and fears as they work through the complex issues surrounding this disease. We are currently looking for mentors and mentees to join this program.

For more information, e-mail us at UGLchapter@scleroderma.org and mention “Peer Mentorship” as the subject.



Thank YOU!

This booklet was crafted by
Camille Novachek & Monica Holzer