0-60…a 24hr window to changes.

That moment of clarity when you wake up and pull the sheets back. You notice no spots…you look again for the second time half expecting to see your leopard print psoriasis patches, but you see nothing.

All your hard work has paid off. No my doctors, no more hands in the pockets, no more excuses why you can't go to the pool.

You bounce out of bed feeling on top of the world. For any Psoriasis patient this is over and over the best day of our lives. Waking up with clear skin is something many take for granted, but for the rest of us patients we know this is a BLESSING. You feel unstoppable, a giant weight lifted off your back. Bring on the day because I'm ready for anything. To quote a famous song "Ain't no mountain high ain't no valley low…" TRULY this is an amazing day for Psoriasis patients and likely for any skin patient.

Now let's jump forward 1400 days approximately 4 years of clear skin. During this period of time the harsh reality of an outbreak has somehow left my memory. I woke up daily and felt no restrictions. No constant set of eyes staring at me, judging me, belittling me inside their mind or at least that's what you told yourself. That 4 year jump was of my own ignorance by becoming complacent with my "chronic" condition. I let myself down by believing it would never happen to me again. Now I don't blame myself for the outbreak, but can't help but wonder why now, why me, why, why, why. Something we all battle with and can't help but try and hide the mental anguish of the game of hide and seek; I must now play with life until my skin goes into remission…if it ever will again.

A surge of empathy rushes into my mind's eye. Instantly I connect with everyone suffering out there. You close your eyes and scream inside your head; you wince opening one eye at a time hoping you were dreaming before. **Reality sets in**. Somehow, overnight, covered from neck to toe in tiny little RED spots. Overnight? From 5 patches to a thousand and counting…If I were back in high school I would likely have texted a friend WTF that morning.

I'd like to take you on a journey in the mind of a psoriasis patient who went from yesterday, wearing shorts and a t-shirt to today, well you'll find out how today is going…

You stare awkwardly at yourself in the mirror for a bit. Your eyes are tired, but wait, do they deceive you? You try and count the spots. You fast forward to the next big event on your calendar and try to calculate in your mind if everything goes right and I get the right medication and I can start right away and oh if only I could see my dermatologist he/she could save me in time. There are a number of factors or outcomes you play in your head and were just starting to touch on the mental battle. A moment goes by before jumping in the shower hoping somehow again this is just a dream or more like a nightmare if you have ever lived through a flare up before. Your shower is over and luckily the mirror is fogged up so maybe you are clear and just don't know it. You look down and your feet are so swollen and red you wonder how your dress shoes will even fit. Your once nice legs are covered in spots and yearn to be scratched. You continue up past your groin and find your trunk covered also. At this point you hope one of two things is ok. You check your hands (hands are a very hard thing to cover up in everyday life and will undoubtedly enter you into a number of awkward conversations if they have spots) ok so your hands are covered like your feet…please oh please have a clear face. I have one solace left…my neck and face look to be ok…I can do this you say to yourself.

After wrestling with a number of emotions and finally picking out the best outfit to “hide in plain sight” at work, you know your journey is just beginning. As my journey so recently has again. A journey towards control, towards that feeling of equality with the rest of the people you see daily whom never have to worry about this sort of thing happening to them. Who may wake up with the odd pimple and think life is over. I envy those who employ such negligence for true suffering. It’s been just over a week now covered and it’s getting worse. Those small patches have merged into larger patches. Those once neighbours have joined into a larger itch factory begging for me to scratch that top layer away. I mean what could be under there…hey it’s probably my clear skin. If I could just scratch all these away maybe I could be clear quicker. It doesn’t take a doctor to tell you this is a bad idea. You can’t help yourself at first. The initial sensation of fingers on your skin satisfying that inner itch feels amazing. That raging inferno of heat, soreness, dryness, tightness is constantly burning when you break out this bad this quickly. Moments later your brain kicks in to fight off your muscles and stop yourself from itching. You lie back angry with yourself and then the pain kicks in. It’s now twice as bad and you have a new itch. What do you do? You haven’t even left the house yet and already you have fought internally with yourself a number of times and in a losing battle.

I’ve been here before and survived. I know my struggle will get worse before it gets better, but this will not be a sad ending. As the story continues I’m confident I will be the victor in it, but I can’t help and wish I had an easy button to press right now. “BEEP” all of a sudden things would go back to two weeks ago. I guess we all wish that button existed so we could right all our wrongs. For now I don’t have a right way to handle this recent outbreak. I can honestly only handle it, hour by hour, day by day. However I will not let the Psoriasis control my life. I may have to concede this initial battle to my condition or disease if you prefer the word, but it won’t be the last of me. Many times I have seen darkness with my struggles. This recent outbreak has taken me to places I dared never go again. Depression is an understatement. Seclusion is a given. Psoriasis feels like my living tomb. How will I ever get up tomorrow for work?

As a human being we all have trials and tribulations we must outwit or conquer. As a patient with psoriasis I know all too well how much harder my day to day has recently become. I made up my mind though and this mind will share my journey with you. I encourage others to write about their problems. Reach out for that glimmer of understanding. Join the conversation and let’s help those in need without the strength on their own, to come out of the shadows and tell their story. I’m just a patient like so many who sometimes needs a friend. Someone to tell them it will all be ok. Someone who reminds them of their worth to the world and not to sacrifice that on a short term setback. Someone just like you reading this letter and relating it to your struggles, but ultimately sometimes when times are tough you need someone to just hold your hand. By the way if you didn’t know psoriasis isn’t contagious so if you’re that person I reach out to…please reach back…it will be the most inspiring thing you could give a patient in need.