



# Today I Fulfilled a Dream

By [Charles Vogl](#)



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Today I fulfilled a dream, and better yet, I recognized it in the moment.

Up till now, I haven't discussed publicly that, not quite a year ago and just weeks after Covid isolation became our California lifestyle, I developed concerning symptoms which led to many weeks of medical testing. Eventually, I found myself waiting for biopsy results that would reveal how much a tumor might threaten my life, or perhaps radically change it. Sitting each evening in quiet prayer, I had time to reflect on what I wanted to leave for my 2-year-old son to remember, take, or embrace from our time together to help him grow into a generous and committed man, instead of something based on masculine caricatures.

In the past year, I had three separate surgeries. The surgeons operated expertly. The nurses were attentive and caring. And in a Covid crazed era, it was an honor and miracle to be treated so well. But the journey was difficult. One pre-operation test showed that I lost 3 units of blood before the surgery. I read the surgeon's alarm even with her mask on. The numbers explained my startling weakness and

why the day before I couldn't cross a city park with my wife and son. I barely managed to walk from the car to the nearest bench, to lie down facing the sky.

The outcomes have now exceeded our best hopes. My organs all work and I'm apparently past this medical chapter. The recovery was painful though, and with all that went on, I basically laid down for nearly six months.

Besides the possibility of a shortened life and losing years with my son, the scariest thing was losing my thinking powers - concentration, comprehension, recall, and anything that looked like writing. *For a guy whose value proposition is thinking smart and writing well, this was scary indeed.* Mentors told me to find patience, take care of myself, and trust that thinking would work again. They were right.

**To rebuild my strength while healing**, I went down to the flat Alameda shoreline to waddle as a middle-aged man in recovery. While a struggle, it was fun to take one humble step at a time, remembering each stride was a win on the journey to a stronger me.

One morning I saw a younger man, shirtless, running by seemingly enjoying his full stride beach run. I thought, "Man, I'd love to get there and do that with that strength."

The short waddles turned into one-hour walks, then two-hour walks, then six mile round trip beach strolls. During my walks I called friends for the kind of long conversations you only get when you invest the time.



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Eventually I tried 10-minute runs, and then extended them gradually until that 6-mile out-and-back beach walk became a run route. I am very proud of that.

Today, in that famous California golden light before sunset I went for a run on the Alameda shoreline. Getting to the beach park felt like an obligatory Covid era effort to stave off aging. It was also a checklist item so today wasn't just more pandemic isolating at home with family and screens.

The first miles felt difficult and plodding, and then at about mile four, it happened. I recognized feeling comfortable, free, and alive. My body gloriously worked.

In full stride, I noticed feeling strong, peaceful, and thrilled as my body flew down that beach with earned strength and pride. *I noticed the miracle of my body working, and the wisdom that it always won't be so. And I felt euphorically grateful that I have this time.* I achieved a dream that was only a fantasy just three months ago.

But why share this here and now?

Because the appreciation, peace, and gratitude didn't stop at recognizing the miracle of my resilient and capable body. Thoughts flowed through to the many people who held me up, showed up, reached out, and stood ready while I got through this Covid year.

I'm a guy who writes about, speaks about, and advises global organizations about connecting people into a community. This means investing so we grow relationships of mutual concern. This year I didn't just appreciate my own community in this unprecedented separated age.

I **relied** on it through a crazy tough time, and I'm still running. Book four is already started.

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