

**NAME**

Wild and Precious Life MP3.mp3

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**DATE**

November 25, 2020

**DURATION**

30m 20s

**START OF TRANSCRIPT****[00:00:00]**

The following is a message from Wellspring's congregation.

**[00:00:05]**

Hi, my name is Noah. I'm 16 years old and I am in 11th grade.

**[00:00:10]**

I'm going to read this off my computer because I have short term memory, but I'll explain that later. I go to twenty first century cyber charter school. I have been going there since seventh grade and not because of the pandemic. Before the pandemic, I attended school. I think Dungeons and Dragons with my friends. I enjoyed drawing and reading. My life in this pandemic has changed a lot. I go on hikes and I bike with my dad and brother who never attended more meetings than I ever thought was possible. I have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, so I have been pretty isolated since March. I was born prematurely at 28 weeks and weighed two pounds, one ounce, not many people know this, but I had a twin brother named Brennan, but he passed away when he was 11 days old. Before, because of my early life. Because I only start in life sorry, because of my early start in life, I've had many therapy interventions which included speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and social skills. At eight years old, I was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder by behavioral specialist, my pediatrician never felt that diagnosis matched my actions. I have struggled with organization of thoughts, motor planning and forgetfulness.

**[00:01:47]**

School has always been challenging for me, no matter how hard I studied or how much I applied myself, I was not able to get good grades. My pediatrician referred me to a neuropsychologist and doctor, her review of my medical records, she was able to give me a correct diagnosis as an infant. I had a level two brain, which she later discovered was just like having a stroke. The stroke damaged my frontal lobe and the neuropsychologist explained to me and my mom that was the reason I was having so much trouble with my memory organization and motor planning. With my new diagnosis, I am. I got a new treatment plan and interventions, and I'm happy to report that I have made a B on a roll for two years and I'm confident that I will keep up, keep it up in my junior and senior years. I am grateful for my occupational therapist, Miss Lauren. Because she's helped me with problem solving, organizing my thoughts, executive functioning and my favorite activity, cooking, I'm a better cook because of Miss Lauren. She taught me how to follow a recipe and plan before I start cooking. And I made some very yummy cakes.

**[00:03:08]**

Another passion of mine is gardening. I have a summer job with a non-profit organization named Trellis Featherless Teaching Sustainable Gardening. One of my jobs was working in lower income communities to build a sustainable garden. Another job I like is harvesting various vegetables to put in boxes for CSA. Trellis became a hybrid job because of covid. I was not able to go to the work site. We can meet online and discuss the environmental issues of the country. I love learning about other people's lives. It was during an online listening party of the Moth Radio Hour, with fellow ministry members that decided that I wanted to answer Mary Oliver's question. Tell me what it is you plan to do with one wild and precious life. There are several things I hope you do with my precious life, I'm really into paleo artistry and I want to be a paleo artist.

**[00:04:09]**

They work in museums and help stage life like scenes of prehistoric animals. I'm also interested in bioacoustics, which is the study of animal and human sounds and communication. But realistically, and because of our love of food, I would most likely pursue a career as a chef. Thank you.

**[00:04:37]**

My name is Stephanie Waldman and I'm twenty three years old, many of you know me from when I was much younger, some of you know me now and most of you know my parents, Steve and Jose Waldman. It's interesting to

me how close I feel to all of you, regardless of how long it's been since I've been with you. That, to me, is a deep area of this community that I found myself to be a part of. My biggest hope is that you all feel similarly about some community in your life, whether it's here or somewhere else, especially during this very strange time. I rewrote my draft for this talk maybe 100 times, I feel like I have so much to share with you all, but in each draft I noticed a trend. I was trying to bring up my mental illnesses as a side point, and my story felt important to include them. But I couldn't put too much focus on them because there's so much more important stuff that I've done. I tried to add a sentence here, there about how mental illness has slightly affected me, but it never felt authentic when I tried to make my discussion of mental health. So I when I tried to take my discussion of mental health out of my job completely, I felt even more like I was lying to all of you about my life.

**[00:05:49]**

Eventually, when going the other way and writing a draft entirely about mental illness, something felt right and felt honest. And it felt like I was finally sharing my true wild and precious life with you all. My mental illnesses sometimes feel like they control the entirety of who I am, and this year I was applying to medical schools. I was repeatedly told that I should not include anything at all about my diagnoses. Maybe that's why I felt I couldn't talk to you about them more likely, I think I have bought into the idea that having a mental illness is a weakness. I would never tell anyone else that, but telling myself and discrediting my own accomplishments. That's easy. The truth is it is easy to focus on the bad and the bad alone, so much of my mental headspace is used to overcome my more debilitating symptoms. And sometimes I forget to stop and think of the things that I've been able to do despite them. This year, I applied to 15 medical schools. Took the UNCA and matched my score goal. I got a raise at my job while being told that my work is invaluable to my team. Last year, I graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's of science in neuroscience. It was a four year degree that I did in three years. I mean, come on, that's crazy. That's impressive.

**[00:07:13]**

And a super cingey as it is for me to talk about myself that way. It's really important to remind myself of those successes. Bringing these successes up, I can understand why medical schools, my advisers and even sometimes my mom expressed that it may be better to leave my mental illnesses out of the conversation. Why focus on the negative when I can speak about the positive? Well, for me, speaking about the negative helps me remember that the struggles I'm going through are valid and normal and common. As a twenty three year old, I very rarely share my diagnosis. These sorry diagnoses to others and here surprise. More often I hear, oh my gosh, me too. We're twins. It's a very GenZE way of showing support. But honestly, it's really important to me and my mental health to not feel alone because I'm not and none of us are. The best thing, I think, is to put in some work to remind myself that having bad days, especially ones caused by my mental illnesses, did not did not negate the big things that I've done. Some similarly, having done the big things, does not mean that my diagnoses don't exist or that they matter less. With my wild and precious life, I'm choosing to follow the path of becoming a physician, I'm proud of myself for that. But with my wild and precious life, I will also have to endure the hardships that come along with having anxiety, depression and ADHD.

**[00:08:44]**

I am proud of myself for those parts, too, though, because I have them, but I'm not allowing them to control me even when it would be easier to do so. I didn't choose for mental illness to be a part of my life, but I am choosing to not let it stop me from following my dreams. I'm choosing to be honest about who I am, how I feel and when I need help. That being said, not everyone's mental illness is present in the same way, and some people need considerably more help than others. If anything from this, I hope that you take away that there's no shame in who you are or what you're going through and there's no shame in getting any level of help. In case you didn't already know, WellSpring's has a team of people ready to help called the Caring Team, they're not mental health professionals, but they can listen and they can get you connected with more professional support if you need it. The information for this team will show up on screen briefly before the next speaker if you're in a place where some extra help is needed right now. Screenshot that page and reach out. Thank you all for listening so much, and I hope that I see you all in person soon.

**[00:10:09]**

Hey WellSpringers, it's Erica, and I'm so very lucky to speak with you guys today. I was actually a little terrified when Reverend Lee asked me to be a part of this today. I tend to be a person who hides in the background. And it took a while for me to feel brave enough to do this, and I was thinking about how I wanted to go about discussing my one wild and precious life. And I thought, what better way than to tell you about my journey to WellSpring's? Because it's a story of bravery and courage, and if anything, I think that's what I'm looking for in my one wild and precious life.

**[00:10:58]**

So in twenty fifteen, I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer rather unexpectedly.

**[00:11:08]**

It was a rare form that is not genetic, so it wasn't expected in the family. And I went through the surgery and the chemotherapy and lost all of my hair, which was not fun at all, obviously. But when I came out of it, I was looking for something. That maybe I hadn't been able to do before, something that would make me find my passions in life

again. And through Facebook, an ad for something I had never looked for and didn't know why I ever showed up for me, but it was an ad for a sleepaway adult camp summer camp. And I had always wanted to do that as a child, but never had the chance to. And so I screwed up my courage to the sticking place. And I signed up for it. And I had to drive all the way into New York, Lake George area about five hours away and sleep in a bunk camp with about 10 or 12 other girls for a week. And I was so excited to go and eat in the canteen and do crafts and play in the lake, all the things you think about as a kid. But the name of this camp was actually Soul Camp.

**[00:12:35]**

And when I got there, I realized that the classes were a lot different than I was expecting. They really had to probe into your life and into things that would help you with your growth. And it was so eye opening for me. And I went to one class with the chiropractor who also looked at your chakras. And she told me that I needed to work on my purple chakra, which is your crown chakra, and that is your universal connectedness and your spirituality. And when I was growing up, that really wasn't a part of my life. I grew up in the military. My father was in the Air Force and I moved all over the place. And we were never introduced to religion until I was in ninth grade. And it just really wasn't a part of my growing up and I have had issues with religion and the dogma of it, and so I really hadn't ever looked back into it for myself. So coming out of Seoul, Kim, I got home and I received a magazine that I had never seen before and I haven't seen again since.

**[00:13:54]**

It was a magazine called Chester Springs Life, and it had a, I don't know, four or five page spread about Wellspring's. It almost seemed fated. And so when I drove up to Bell Hall that first time and I looked at that huge set of stairs going up to the building, I was terrified. But when I got there, it was such an amazing experience. And I have to admit, the fact that they sang The Beatles on my first day in there could just say, sold, sign me up. I was ready to see what Wellspring's is all about. And the more I've gotten to know it, the more it speaks to my soul.

**[00:14:43]**

And so for me, the story of my one wild and precious life. Is a growth, if I had to put it in one word, growth and bravery going outside of my box and learning more about myself and how I can be a better me. So thank you for listening and I appreciate the opportunity and have a blessed, wild and precious life. Thank you.

**[00:15:26]**

My wild and precious life really began. a journey.

**[00:15:34]**

It began many years ago when I met my wife at my best friend's house, I'd come down to Delaware to interview for a job which promptly fell through. Maria and I met over dinner and it was love at first sight. The next time I saw her.

**[00:16:00]**

I did not even recognize her because she had gotten dressed for church, true love, indeed.

**[00:16:14]**

This was. Only the beginning of my journey. In this wild and precious life, I found work in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. And we were on the road again. This became.

**[00:16:37]**

A bit of a whirlwind tour, and I'll compress all of the following years into this statement, what a long, strange trip it's been.

**[00:16:54]**

Three boys.

**[00:16:57]**

Now, twenty six, thirty two, thirty four, a glorious marriage. I hope of thirty five years. I'll have to check. With the boss about this.

**[00:17:17]**

I've made some wonderful friends on this journey. Some of whom.

**[00:17:29]**

Are some of whom are members of Wellspring's.

**[00:17:39]**

Unending, unending, thanks to Merle Bowe, Pete Higgins. And Lois Lutz, we met in a writers group, and we have been friends ever since. In fact, Pete and Merle introduced me to Wellspring's. I was hooked by the possibilities of a religious organization.

**[00:18:13]**

That is so flexible, flexible and open to all.

**[00:18:21]**

By the way. We have the let's see, we have the most skilled and diverse set of musicians known to man. The best and worst parts of this journey have involved my health challenges. I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when I was twenty eight.

**[00:18:57]**

We're at.

**[00:19:04]**

Along the way, I have been challenged. In so many ways. But as a result, I have become quite self-reliant sometimes. To my own peril.

**[00:19:35]**

I. Have become.

**[00:19:42]**

I got it. I have become more humble.

**[00:19:47]**

And have learned to ask for help. This is the true that is a true and valuable life experience. I recommend it to to everyone. Since none of us are getting any younger. For my family. And for all of you. I want to be a model.

**[00:20:21]**

Uh.

**[00:20:23]**

Of resilience. And resourcefulness. Always caring about others in a loving way. I want to stay involved. And in positive community. Oriented activities, using my abilities, whatever they may be at the time. Recently, I saw two films that spoke to me.

**[00:20:58]**

About the need to. Uh.

**[00:21:05]**

Take advantage of each moment. And.

**[00:21:14]**

Marshall and Marshall, my resources to move forward. In the movie Dead Poets Society.

**[00:21:25]**

The community group, I am reminded.

**[00:21:32]**

Yeah, I missed the line here, folks. In the movie that was in the movie Dead Poets Society. I am reminded to seize the day.

**[00:21:51]**

In the movie Patch Adams, The Community of Patients. Became healers. By being of service. To one another. Just as we do in the Wellspring's community. I plan to lead my life guided by those same principles. Each of us is faced with daily challenges.

**[00:22:30]**

Doing. During the pandemic. And.

**[00:22:41]**

And we all must decide how to manage them. Some may get.

**[00:22:57]**

Oh, where am I overwhelmed?

**[00:23:01]**

Yes, like me right now, some may get overwhelmed and give up.

**[00:23:09]**

But I choose to face those challenges directly and plan for a better future.

**[00:23:19]**

We can all contribute to whatever extent. We can. It's not over till it's over. If any of you or Yogi Bear, Yogi Bear fans. I keep on fighting to stay to stay positive. So what am I going to do with my wild and precious life, you ask? Well, let's see. What I can do with where things are today. And I will keep my focus on the horizon. For those wild and precious things yet to come.

**[00:24:27]**

Well, good morning, Wellspring's. My name is Ed Thorton. I'm an elder in the community.

**[00:24:36]**

I'm age 83. It's an honor and a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to share the evolution of my one wild and precious life.

**[00:24:51]**

And the fourth, born in a family of six five boys and my sister Pat, both my poor parents were born in the city of Cork County Cork, Ireland.

**[00:25:07]**

My mother died at her age 43, my age nine, after giving birth to Pat. Her death devastated me for many, many years. I grew up a very angry, judgmental man because of her death and 12 years of strict Irish Catholic education. As a young man, I stuffed my feelings and became an addict, a drug of choice was food in general, sugar in particular.

**[00:25:51]**

For many years, my spiritual life was the 12 stages of Overeaters Anonymous. Many years of individual and group therapy was more than 20 years of active participation in the Mankind Project helped me realize how to love myself to the point where I now say this affirmation daily because I am the only person I will have a relationship all my life. I choose to love myself the way I am now, to always acknowledge that I'm just enough the way I am to love and cherish myself, to be my own best friend, to be the person I would like to spend the rest of my life with, to always take care of myself so that I can take care of others to always grow, develop and share my love and life.

**[00:27:01]**

I've tried to live my life following the words of John Wesley, quote, Do all the good you can by all the means you can in all the ways you can, in all the places you can and all the times you can to all the people you can as long as ever you can.

**[00:27:29]**

For three years ago, my beautiful creative wife, Susan and I visited Wellspring's for the first time at the invitation of our good friends, Denise and Gary Baskin. We immediately enjoyed the people, the music and outstanding comments by Reverend Ken and reverently. Wellspring's quickly became our new spiritual home.

**[00:28:06]**

Our first small group experience with WellSprings was attending a soup and six dinner at the home of Sidney and Bob Key, where we met several other World Series members. And some of you know, I'm facing two possible life threatening situations. Stage four, chronic kidney disease and melanoma. Skin cancer conscious living conscious died has now become my one wild and precious life.

**[00:28:44]**

The one thing I have in common with all of you is time.

**[00:28:49]**

This is the best time management statement I have ever since it was created by Dr. Leon a Denko quote.

**[00:29:01]**

In his wisdom, God gives to us a limited, finite number of hours a year in which to achieve our goals, both materially and spiritually. He gives us these hours in sequence, day by day, month by month. If they are wasted, however, they are needed, repeatable, not refundable. He gives the same amount to the rich and to the poor, to the young and to the old. Whatever successes we may achieve in this life will come to the purpose to which we put God's priceless gift. Time for school.

**[00:29:50]**

Going to end my presentation this morning with this statement. Thank God I'm not the man I used to be.

**[00:30:01]**

May God continue to bless each and every one of you. Thank you.

**[00:30:07]**

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