



Would your organization benefit from a personal visit with Jeff?

Jeff is available to share his story with groups and organizations. If you would like to schedule a personal presentation, email mathman.lewis@gmail.com. You can also visit his website at www.dontworryaboutme.com

"Jeff Lewis is a most inspirational educator. He exemplifies the dedication and determination of a true professional." –David Smith, Executive Director, Arizona Professional Educators

"A wonderfully courageous and inspirational speaker. The epitome of 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'" –Chaplain Judy Weir, Interfaith Community Church



Don't Give Up

The inspiring story of a teacher's will to live a joyful, productive life

Jeff Lewis woke up the morning of April 12, 2005 thinking he had a bad case of the flu. Though he had rarely missed school in his 28 years of teaching math, he stayed home that morning.

By noon his temperature was 104 degrees and he was being transported by ambulance to the emergency room. Hours later doctors were unsure what was wrong. Facing uncertainty, Jeff told Carol, his then girlfriend, that he wanted them to do everything they could to save his life.

Jeff was fighting a common infection, the effort of which caused his body to shut down circulation to the limbs in order to continue providing blood to his brain, heart, and lungs. He experienced kidney failure, cardiac arrest, and was given less than a one percent chance of surviving.



Jeff lost consciousness a short time later, the hours turning into days, and days into weeks. His body was struggling to fight the infection and was making gradual progress, but the continued lack of circulation to his limbs was causing another problem.

Jeff's limbs were dying. What began as a blueish tint in his hands and feet was moving further up his arms and legs, taking the life out of his limbs.

While Jeff lay unconscious throughout the ordeal, Carol fought for his life. When medical professionals suggested that it was time to let him go, Carol kept fighting.

Carol knew Jeff. She knew he loved life. He was active, productive, and to all who knew him, hilarious. When he wasn't teaching, he golfed, bowled, sang, danced, visited with friends, and constantly cracked jokes. She knew he would want to live.

Jeff woke up after being unconscious for three weeks to discover he was in a different hospital and no longer had hands or feet.

With miraculous resiliency, Jeff accepted this shocking new reality and began moving on. To everyone's astonishment, he was smiling and making jokes within days of waking up after the amputations.

Jeff was on a ventilator so he wasn't able to use his voice, but that didn't stop him from communicating. He was using his infamously expressive, emphatic, and sometimes sarcastic facial expressions—true hallmarks of Jeff's jovial personality. Always prepared to break out into a silly song, that is exactly what Jeff did when he was finally off the ventilator and had his voice back. This is a man who is happy to be alive.

He had a difficult road ahead of him, but Jeff was already talking about returning to the classroom. The next three months of hospitalization were challenging, but he met each set back with the determination to return to his normal life. Jeff started by marrying Carol while still in the hospital. He returned to teaching after only nine months from the start of his ordeal and began bowling a few months after he returned to the classroom.