



Hi my name is Lucy Brack. I am 33 years old and I live in Sydney.

I was born with Cystic Fibrosis; I was a premie baby with very low birth weight.

My Mother was told that I would not survive for very long, to hold me and give me so much love, yet did they know my little ears pricked up and from that moment I decided to fight and live.

I had annual "tune ups" at POWCH aka Sydney Children's hospital until I was 17, then moved to RPA, until I needed a Lung Transplant.

The "tune ups" became much more frequent, the length of admissions longer and my health started declining, my body was becoming weaker and everything started becoming difficult, just the basics of eating, sleeping, showering and breathing were exhausting.

My doctor at RPA, Dr Paul Torzillo made the call, that I needed to be listed and it all happened very quickly, I was in disbelief, as was my family; we all questioned if the timing was right.

In January 2003 I was listed at St Vincent's Hospital for a lung transplant. By early November, I realised I am running out of time as I was thin to the bone and extremely ill.

I spoke with Melveta on Thursday, desperately wanting to live and clinging to life. When I left St Vincent's I was feeling broken, with no control over future! I was terrified and extremely emotional. I finally received the call on Saturday the 22nd November 2003. It was a very hard day. I felt I could no longer fight on. I was 38 kilos, on oxygen, on feeds, unable to eat, always felt bloated and couldn't breathe.

I started creating an artwork about fear. I was so desperate to get a call. I imagined the nurse called me and played out that situation in my mind, but I ended up in a blubbering mess. In matter of going to the bathroom, I missed a call. When I listened to the voicemail and it was a message from a nurse saying "we have your lungs".

I was elated, I was buzzing, I was scared, a million emotions as I wanted the chance, I wanted to keep on living and achieving the life I dreamed of.

When I called the nurse back, she asked me to make my way in to emergency at 8pm. It was going to happen this time!

Later, Monique called me and said "we have lungs and they are a great match, they could almost be yours"

My mum was still overseas, but luckily my stepfather- Murray- had just returned to Australia.

I called him and he was very excited, he headed to collect me and we headed into hospital through Emergency. My great friends, Al and Clint, came in too.

It was a magical experience. The feeling in the air was very moody. I remember, it was the closing of the rugby world cup, Australia Vs England, at around midnight where England beat us by 1 goal, then bang off went fireworks. They lit up the sky right outside the window, next minute they were ready for me.

I always joke, that they must have kept the lungs on ice, so they could watch how the match played out.

For me the biggest thing was I didn't want to say goodbye or see you later, so I said "See you on the flip side".

The next thing I remember, I was waking up in ICU, with tubes everywhere. Family by my side and I felt well. I looked at my fingers and toes and they were not blue anymore, my skin colour had returned and I cried happy tears.

I have been very fortunate with little complications, until January 2013 when I became violently unwell with my creatinine level in the 400s and my lung function slowly declining. I was now in chronic Renal Failure; I started getting chest infections every couple of months and it was very hard to eat. I only wanted to eat vegetables. I was very fearful of how this would impact on my lungs and life.

Mum had been working behind the scene organising a trip to Paris in May, to keep my spirits up and encourage me to keep fighting. I was so unwell it took me 6 hours to pack my small bag and we just made the flight that morning, but we knew I may never do this again, at least not while I needed dialysis, so we went for it. Luckily my mum is a registered nurse, so that also helped. It was the trip of a life time!

Dialysis was started in August 2013 and now I was on another transplant journey. Blood and tissue matching started soon after. Mum and my partner, James, were both a match and the doctors now would decide who would be the donor and they decided James!

I was unwell and surrendered again and next thing the renal team said "we have your transplant date", now I just had to stay well for 3 weeks.

James and I stayed well and made it to the hospital. It was so challenging to be on the other end of being concerned for your loved one. James was extremely nervous, I really felt for him and wanted to console him, but that made it worse. We were at hospital waiting together, then they separated us, then James called me and said he was being taken down and then it was my turn, Mum was there, as were Al and Clint and once again I was saying "See you on the flip side", I was transplanted on 21st August 2014.

Everything went according to plan and the kidney is functioning so well, with creatinine levels of 58-71 and my lung function is still climbing. I am exercising again now and rebuilding muscle tone.

I have fulfilled many dreams in the last 11.5 years, from having my first real employment, travelling the world, studying my masters of curating and cultural leadership, continuing my art practice, being healthy, active and vibrant, having fun with my fur baby, family and friends, running and breathing, the list could go on and on.

I am eternally grateful to my donor and donor family and to my partner. Some amazing people exist and because of them, so do I. I have gratitude every single day and continue to chase my dreams.

This year in August will be my kidneys 1st birthday, with my lungs celebrating 12 years "on the flip side". Life is wonderful!

I hope you have enjoyed reading my story and that it has inspired you to stay positive, grateful and keep living your dreams!

Never give up!