

The end of times: aftermath

As a young carer, Cornelius of Queensland, knows what it is like to care for a friend. However, in early 2010 his friend passed away. This is their story.

Cornelius and his friend Paul met in early 2006 at a church organised youth camp. However, it wasn't until the middle of that year that they became fast friends. After spending two weeks trekking around NSW the pair were almost inseparable.

In many ways Paul was a living miracle. He was almost completely blind having less than 5 per cent vision in one eye only. He had renal failure, epilepsy, depression and numerous other problems. There were many times when the doctors told him he had less than six months to live but he would always pull through. Cornelius became his carer in early 2008 when Paul decided that he would move from Sydney to Queensland to get away from the weather, which was playing havoc with his arthritis.

During his role as a carer Cornelius ensured that Paul looked after his hygiene. He cooked and served a diet of low-sodium foods, looked after Paul's medication, transport, Paul's emotion and physical well-being as well as the finances.

After two long - sometimes strenuous, sometimes fun - years Paul was admitted to hospital for an infection in his arm. At the time Cornelius, who was away, was not informed of the seriousness of the situation. Later though, he learned that Paul also had complex conditions caused by the renal failure. Paul made the decision to abandon his dialysis and passed away quietly at the end of his second week in hospital.

Paul taught Cornelius that it's important to recognise the value and meaning of a true friend. The most important thing that Cornelius learnt was *that it doesn't matter how bad things get, how big the hurdle is, how dark the day is, there is - always, always - a light at the end of the tunnel.*

Everything can be overcome. I should know. I am Cornelius.



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