

# April More Voices: Scars

Category: Scars

written by Paul Gross | April 1, 2024

Dear readers,

My physical scars are hardly worth mentioning. I have a scar on my back where a surgeon removed a lipoma—a fatty lump the size of a golf ball—twenty years ago. On my abdomen, I have a few smaller, more recent scars from laparoscopic prostate surgery.

I'm lucky. The scars don't bother me. Hardly anyone notices them. And if I'm wearing a bathing suit, the appearance of a scar on a man suggests something heroic—a wound inflicted in battle—rather than a sign of vulnerability or an imperfection that detracts from physical beauty.

Others aren't so fortunate.

One *Pulse* author recently wrote about the cruel teasing she endured as a child because of her surgical scars. Another, a physician, wrote of the scars on her arms—a product of teenage self-harm—that she had to consider when deciding what clothes to wear.

For most of us, it's the emotional scars that cause the most trouble, even if we're not completely aware of them. If we're lucky, our struggles may bring us to a therapist's office where a light switches on, our scars are revealed and we have the opportunity to talk about the wounds that lie beneath those scars.

Some scars are profound. I once met a patient who seemed cloaked in mourning. When I asked him about his sadness, he told me that his mother had died while giving birth to him. I tried to imagine what it would feel like to carry that knowledge through life.

Another patient told a medical student that he'd been raised by an aunt in another village, never quite comprehending why he couldn't be with his mother and his siblings. When he was in his fifties a relative finally revealed the explanation: His mother had been raped, and he was the resulting child.

My scars pale by comparison. Still, I do have them. One that I picked up as an adult came in a medical office, when I was given the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes—not by a warm, compassionate physician but rather by a receptionist who broke the news to me while I stood at her window in the waiting room.

Ouch.

We're all scarred—all in the process of healing from life's wounds.

And I'm convinced that some of the most scarred individuals are those who insist that they are unblemished—*perfectly fine*—and whose impenetrable exteriors serve, I suspect, as shields against further scarring.

Our April *More Voices* theme is Scars. Tell us about your scar—one you wear, one you feel or perhaps one you caused someone else.

Share your story using the [More Voices Submission Form](#). For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#). And have a look at last month's theme, [The Biopsy](#).

Remember, your health-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With warm regards,

Paul Gross  
Editor