

Dear Dr. B

Category: Grit

written by Mandy Ramsey | January 23, 2025

Dear Dr. B,

I'm writing to say I'm glad I listened to my gut and didn't let you cut me open.

You may be surprised to hear that my Achilles tendon grew back after a year of recovery—eight weeks on crutches and in a cast, 32 weeks in a boot, various shoe lifts and wedges, months of physical therapy, acupuncture, visualization, extra vitamins, collagen, bone broth, castor oil packs, and mantra and sound healing—but it did grow back, despite your lack of faith. I am now back on my feet hiking, teaching yoga, and even hula-hooping for an hour at a time, pain-free.

I wonder, do you ever prescribe hula-hooping for your patients' rehab or are you just in the business of cutting people open without discussing the contraindications and risks of surgery? It was I, Dr. B, who had to ask those questions. Did you know that hula-hooping not only wakes up the intrinsic muscles of your feet, legs, and core, but it is also an inexpensive tool of joy? One needs joy when recovering from a life-altering injury. May I add that listening to funk, Billy Strings's 20-minute rendition of "Take Me to the Creek," and Lizzo can make it extra fun.

Dr. B, may I also recommend that eye contact, compassion, and a willingness to touch your patients' bandages would help your practice immensely. When you wouldn't even touch me, or unwrap my brace, or talk to me about contraindications of surgery, or take an X-ray or MRI of the injury to see what was going on inside but said you would see it all when you cut me open, I chose not to let you cut me open and staple my completely torn Achilles tendon to my heel bone.

It turns out, Dr. B, that the latest research leans toward no surgery, since the recovery time is the same. A year felt like forever, but I'm so glad I listened to my inner GPS, despite the blinding, nauseating, jaw-clenching pain; the paralysis; and the reality of a year of no hiking or dancing or teaching or gardening. Something inside me said that one slip of your cold scalpel could change the course of my future forever. Another red flag to me was the possibility of a hospital-acquired infection. Is that a red flag to you? Who knows what could have happened had I blindly followed your recommendation instead of my own gut.

Thank you kindly,
Mandy Ramsey
Haines, Alaska