

Featured story:

WART IS IT?

Written by Max Neil Maximchuk

I feel fortunate in a number of ways, not the least of which is being easily able to find wonder in even the simplest of situations. Warts are well within these parameters but one wart in particular became associated with the world of mystery and magic.

Sometimes things happen and they make you wonder. Are there magical powers in the world, ones that we only have glimpses at? What would it be like if we had greater access to them?

My mother told me that if something was not right in our home in Flin Flon, maybe somebody sick or going through a bad time, it wouldn't be long before the phone would start ringing. "What's wrong?" would be the first words my mother would hear from her mother on the other end of the line, some 100 miles away. It was difficult to refute that uncanny sixth sense she held.

Years later I experienced something remarkable about an unremarkable object. A wart. Not a particularly big one nor a bothersome one. It occupied a place near the last upper joint of my left index finger. I often saw it while doing other things and it reminded me to do something about it. Mostly, though, I just curiously looked at it from time to time.

It held a little fascination for me with its transparent housing and a few prominent lines within. I'd inspect it from different angles, turning my hand in different directions to get a closer look. When the hand finally returned to the table I'd often set my mind to taking steps to get rid of it, but I never really got around to it.

Until one day. I went to a nearby drugstore (pharmacy) and purchased some medicinal liquid that would reduce it over time, perhaps even eradicate it altogether. I bought that product, a bottle in a box in a small plastic bag and it sat on a shelf for a week or so. A few finger inspections later I finally came to the big decision of applying the treatment. First thing tomorrow morning. I was getting somewhat tired of it and I committed myself to opening and using the contents of that little jar. Decision made, I slept soundly.

The next day started like any other and after the morning necessities, I approached the waiting container previously set on the table. I took the box in my hand one last time, opened it and took out the jar. A quick reading of the instructions and I placed my left hand at the ready to receive the liquid. But when I looked down to the finger, the wart was nowhere to be seen! I turned my finger over and around, just in case the wart had decided to hide in a slightly different position. A slightly absurd hypothesis you might think, but no less ridiculous to it having disappeared altogether.

It had occupied its place and my thoughts for a few months, and now, when the decision had clearly been made to do something about its removal, it took the initiative and removed itself. It was completely gone. Not a trace of anything to serve as a remembrance of its long acquaintanceship with me.

I prudently returned the bottle into its box and stored it in the medicine cabinet. I showed my finger with the mysteriously absent wart to a number of friends and gradually came to forget the whole affair.

Many years later, living in Barcelona, I came across another wart, occupying a place on my foot. It was a planter's wart and possibly became contracted while walking about in the changeroom of the gym just down the street. I remembered my past experience with the wart back in Winnipeg and decided to test this encounter.

I let it stay for a spell, then some time later I went to a local pharmacy where I bought a solution that promised to dissolve it after a number of applications. I left the bottle in its box that was in a bag on a shelf. It stayed there for a few days. Then I made the clear decision to begin the treatment the following morning.

The following morning arrived, and with it came the familiar recognition of the wart on my foot. I have to say I was disappointed. There was no repeat of the magic and the mystery I was fortunate to encounter the first time.

So, resigned to the fact that we aren't always the recipients of such unexplained magic, I started the treatment. Over time, well within the estimated limits of normal expectations, the wart slowly disappeared, never to return. It wasn't an overnight success but I will never forget its distant cousin that was.

The mysterious overnight disappearance of a wart is nothing to get too excited about, but I have always been fond of that experience. It was one of many reminders that even something as mundane as having a wart can lead to something that can (mildly) shake some foundations of our expectations of what the world should be like. We feel comfortable in feeling the world to be a familiar place and invest a lot in keeping it that way. Yet an incident comes into our world every so often that tells us there is more out there, very nearby, and not what we are accustomed to.