



## My Heart Attack: A Scary Warning and a Blessing

**David O Draper**

*Professor of sports medicine, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA*

**\*Corresponding Author:** David O Draper, EdD, ATC, LAT, FNATA, Professor of sports medicine, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA.

**Received** : November 08, 2020

**Published** : November 17, 2020

Copyright © All rights are reserved  
by David O Draper.

As a professor of athletic training and sports medicine, I get an opportunity to discuss several injuries with my students. Prior to December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 I taught heart attack out of the book. I had never had nor been around someone experiencing a heart attack. On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 I had a heart attack. I am thankful I survived so that I could share this experience with my students.

I have always been active. I was a 4 time state champion in high school distance running events, a college letterman, and have run 5 marathons all under 3 hours. In 1994 I picked up cross country skiing, but still chose running as my favorite mode of exercise. Lately I do about 60-90 minutes of cardio a day. This includes up tempo cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing in the winter or biking and hiking in the summer. I watch what I eat, rarely eat dessert, sugar, French fries or sodas. I thought with my lifestyle, I would never have a heart attack. I WAS WRONG!

In the afternoon of December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, I was cross-country skiing at my favorite venue, Sundance Nordic Center, Provo, UT. I was alone on the mountain. I felt great as they had just received over a foot of new snow. At about 30 minutes into my workout, I felt a stabbing pain in my left arm, centered in the armpit. The pain was so severe that my left arm dropped to my side and I was skiing with only the use of my right arm. I also was nauseas, 2 classic signs of a heart attack. I was about 1 mile from the lodge. It took about 15 minutes of extremely painful work to get to the Nordic Center Lodge. I walked into the lodge, laid down and asked for a cup of water. I wasn't exactly sure I was having a heart attack but did say, "I'm very short of breath and my left arm is killing me." The lodge employees were very busy and my complaints for help not very convincing. I decided to try and drive home. I got in my truck, said a quick prayer—"Heavenly father, please help the pain go away" and started the 15 mile drive home. I was very uneasy during my drive. I kept thinking of having an incident where a heart attack might cause me to merge into oncoming traffic and kill innocent drivers or passengers. God answered my prayer. The pain got so bad that I pulled into The Sundance Fire Station, just 2 miles from the Nordic Center. I asked a person in the lot for help. She went inside and got the paramedics. They put me in the ambulance, hooked me up to an EKG machine, and said the words I dreaded, "Sir, you are having a heart attack." They took excellent care of me and transported me to Timpanogos Regional Hospital. Through a battery of tests, they determined I had 7 blockages, and performed a quadruple by-bass open heart surgery the next day. I spent 4 days in the hospital and 2 weeks recovering at home.

The doctors said the reason I recovered so fast is because I was in such good shape.

Why did a person who was in such good shape have a heart attack—probably genetics. You see, my mother had a triple bypass when she was 62. All of her siblings either died from heart disease or a stroke (like a heart attack to the brain).

I'm thankful that I noticed the warning signs of a heart attack. I'm thankful for first responders, nurses and doctors who gave me excellent help. I'm especially thankful to God for giving me a second chance, and allowing my deceased parents to be my guardian angels during this endeavor. I'm thankful for the thoughts and prayers given me at this time. Never take life for granted.

**Citation:** David O Draper. "My Heart Attack: A Scary Warning and a Blessing". *Therapeutic Advances in Cardiology* 3.2 (2020): 18-19.

As I have looked back on this experience, I realized that there were many miracles that preserved my life.

**Miracle 1:** As I tried to go up higher on the mountain, I found that the trail was closed. I then turned back to go to the lower part of the mountain. If I would have gone further up the mountain, I doubt I would have been able to ski down.

**Miracle 2:** I was alone on the mountain. If I would have been rendered unconscious, they would have found my dead, frozen body the next morning.

**Miracle 3:** While in terrible pain (the worst I had experienced in my lifetime) I was able to ski and walk to the lodge.

**Miracle 4:** I was able to drive 2 miles on an icy road to the fire station where paramedics took care of me. Who drives when they are having a heart attack?

**Miracle 5:** I never once thought I was going to die. About 5 minutes into the ambulance ride I felt the spirit give me a silver lining. What a great story I can tell my students! I used to have to use the textbook as I taught about heart disease. Now I can show my students my scar, and tell them first-hand what a heart attack feels like.

**Miracle 6:** I felt the presence of my deceased parents in the ambulance giving me comfort. Why not, my Mom was a heart attack survivor. Who better to give me comfort?

**Miracle 7:** Even though this is routine, it is still a miracle that I handled the surgery and post-operative effects so well.

During this Thanksgiving season I am thankful that I survived my heart attack. I am also thankful that I have been able to share this experience to over 500 of my students so far.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

**Submit your next manuscript to Scientia Ricerca and benefit from:**

- Quality Editorial service
- Swift Peer Review
- Timely updates about your manuscript status
- Rapid publication on acceptance
- Issue of Publication Certificate
- Global attainment for your research

Submit your manuscript at:

<https://scintiaricerca.com/submit-manuscript.php>