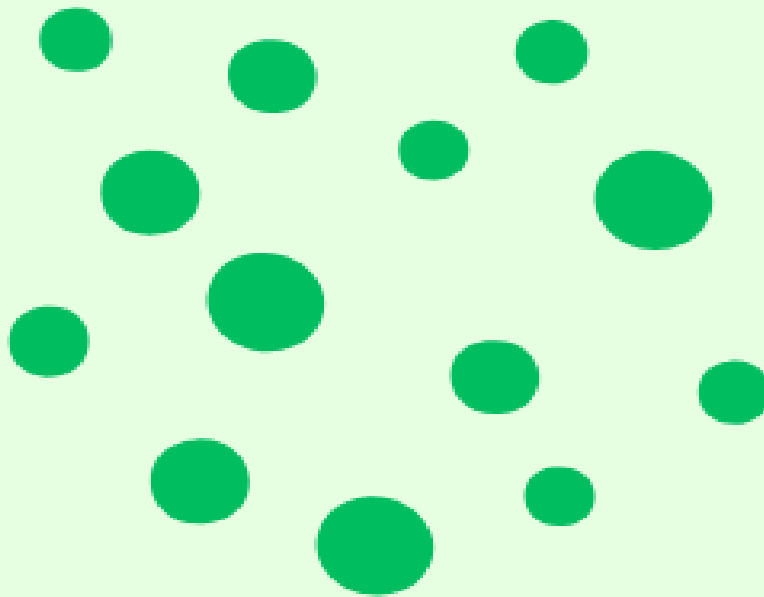


# The Green Dot Method

A Physician's 5-Step Practice for Finding  
Peace When Life Gets Hard



## Before We Begin...

I had just been discharged from the cardiac monitoring unit after a frightening series of abnormal heart rhythms. My doctors were weighing whether I'd need an invasive cardiac ablation procedure. The fear was real. The unknowns were heavy.

And yet, in that moment, I was also strangely at peace.

Not because the situation wasn't serious. Not because I had some spiritual superpower. But because after nearly two decades of battling a rare autoimmune disease (POTS) that has robbed me of my health, I have learned a very specific practice that has carried me through more dark moments than I can count.

I call it **The Green Dot Method**.

In the pages ahead, I'm going to walk you through exactly what it is and how to apply it. It won't make those difficult things go away. But it can change how you experience it. And sometimes, that is everything.

**"When we choose to focus on the green dots, the ways God is still blessing us, it can make such a powerful difference."**

## A Little Background

In 2003, I was 38 years old, and everything was working. I had four kids, a wonderful wife, two careers I loved; one as a board-certified radiologist, one as an ordained pastor. By any measure, life was full and good.

Then Christmas of that year, I woke up with what I thought was a stomach bug. It wasn't. Within weeks, I was losing 20 pounds and being rushed to the ER for IV fluids. After months of unexplained suffering and every test returning negative, I was finally diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease, dysautonomia, that had essentially shut down my gastrointestinal tract.

There was no cure. The Mayo Clinic confirmed it. And complications from a subsequent surgery triggered a second diagnosis: POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardic Syndrome), which made it nearly impossible to stand without my heart rate spiking and nearly passing out.

I became bedbound. I was in my prime. I had four small children who needed their dad. And there I was, lying there wondering how much longer I could survive.

I've been living with this disease now for nearly two decades. And through all of it, the hospital stays, the failed treatments, the setbacks, I've developed a set of practices that have made a genuine difference. This guide is one of them.

## What Are Green Dots?

Especially during hard seasons, life is filled with two kinds of moments. I think of them as dots on a chart.

### **Green Dots**

The good stuff. The blessings, big and small. The moments of warmth, connection, provision, and grace, even when they're sitting right next to the pain.

### **Red Dots**

The hard stuff. The diagnosis. The loss. The fear. The uncertainty. The 'what ifs' that spiral at 2 am.

Here's the thing: in almost every hard season, BOTH kinds of dots are present. The red dots don't erase the green ones; they just make them harder to see.

The Green Dot Method isn't about pretending the red dots don't exist. It isn't toxic positivity or spiritual bypassing. It's a trained, intentional practice of choosing what your mind dwells on because where your mind dwells determines your experience of this moment.

**"Focusing on the red dots leads to anxiety, stress, and depression.**

**Choosing to focus on the green dots can make a powerful  
difference even in the middle of the storm."**

## The 5-Step Green Dot Practice

This is not a one-time exercise. It's a daily practice, especially during difficult seasons. Here's how to do it.

## **Step 1: Name the Red Dots. Then Set Them Down**

You can't skip the pain by ignoring it. The first move is to acknowledge what's hard without letting your mind live there.

Write down or speak out loud the red dots that are weighing on you right now. The diagnosis. The financial strain. The broken relationship. The fear about tomorrow. Give each one a name.

Then, intentionally, actively set them down. You're not pretending they're not real. You're choosing not to let your mind build a home there.

The Prompt: "What is the specific red dot that is consuming my thoughts right now?"

## **Step 2: Resist the 'What If' Spiral**

The natural mind, when under stress, doesn't stay in the present. It fast-forwards to worst-case scenarios. What if this gets worse? What if they can't fix it? What if I don't make it through?

I know this spiral well. I've lived it more times than I can count, lying in a hospital bed, running through every terrifying possibility. The spiral itself becomes its own kind of suffering.

Every time a 'what if' thought surfaces, practice catching it before it runs. You can literally say to yourself: 'That is a 'what if.' I'm not going there right now.'

**The Prompt:** "Am I living in today, or am I catastrophizing tomorrow?"

## **Step 3: Hunt the Green Dots**

This is the core of the practice. It requires intentional effort, especially when everything feels dark, because that's when the green dots go hardest to see.

Look around you, right now, in this moment. Not at what's missing. At what's still there.

When I was in that hospital room writing about this very practice, I looked around and found: my wife, who had been by my side through 20 years of this disease. My healthy kids. My church family. The trees and mountains outside the window. My dog. The simple mercy of breath.

None of that erased the fear about my heart. But each one was a real, present, undeniable gift.

**The Prompt:** "What are 5 green dots blessings that are present in my life right now?"

### **Step 4: Thank God for Each One**

This step takes the practice from observation to transformation. There's a reason Scripture returns again and again to gratitude not as a religious nicety, but as a weapon against despair.

The Apostle Paul wrote from prison: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.' (Philippians 4:6)

The move isn't to pretend everything is fine. The move is to bring the pain to God AND to bring gratitude at the same time. Both, together. That combination is where the peace Paul talks about, the kind that 'transcends all understanding' — begins to enter.

**The Practice:** Take your list of green dots and speak them out as a prayer of thanks, one by one, out loud.

### **Step 5: Anchor to the Greatest Green Dot**

When I'm at my lowest, when the physical suffering is overwhelming and even small blessings are hard to feel, I return to four words that the Apostle Paul also gives us in Philippians 4:

| **"The Lord is near."**

That's it. That's the anchor. Whatever the enemy has thrown into this season whatever red dots are stacking up, the Lord is near. Not distant. Not unaware. Near.

This isn't wishful thinking. It's a fact grounded in the reality of a God who has proven Himself faithful time and again. When you can hold onto that when you let it become the green dot that outweighs every red one something shifts.

**The Declaration:** Say it out loud: "The Lord is near. He is with me in this."

## Your Daily Green Dot Practice Card

Use this every day during difficult seasons. It takes 10 minutes or less.

### The Green Dot Daily Practice

- Step 1: Name the red dot consuming my thoughts:**

\_\_\_\_\_

- Step 2: Catch and release the 'what if' spiral.**

\_\_\_\_\_

- Step 3: List 5 green dots present in my life right now:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- Step 4: Pray through my list with thanks.**

- Step 5: Declare out loud: "The Lord is near. He is with me in this."**

## One Final Word

I want to be honest with you: I still struggle with this. Even now. Even after two decades. Even after writing a book about it.

Some mornings, I wake up, and the red dots seem to be everywhere. The nausea is there before my eyes are even fully open. The fear creeps in before I've had a single thought. And I have to make a deliberate choice — not once, but again and again — to turn my focus toward the green.

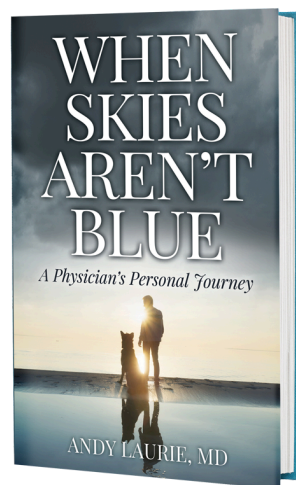
That's why I call it a practice. It's not a one-time fix. It's a discipline. And like all disciplines, it gets stronger with repetition.

If you've found value in this guide and want to go deeper — to understand more about the full framework I've developed for navigating life when the skies aren't blue — I've written about all of it in my book. It goes much further than what's here, including all 10 powerful steps along with specific prescriptions you can put into practice.

I wrote it in the middle of one of the darkest seasons of my life. I wrote it for you.

## Ready to Go Deeper

**Order When Skies Aren't Blue Today!**



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