

MY ILLNESS – MY GIFT.

I consider my return to health nothing short of miraculous. Although it was a long slow journey taking about seven years, I can, on reflection, now see the perfection of it all and I have no regrets.

My story starts in the year 2002. I became ill with many severe symptoms - so severe that I was forced to resign from my job. I had Fibromyalgia and Chronic fatigue syndrome. And so I started on the search to try and understand what had happened to change me physically and emotionally. Previously I had been relaxed, confident, outgoing, energetic, cheerful, fit (although not so **healthy**) and generally just having a ball! Or was I? On my emotional rollercoaster journey I am forced to question the person I thought I was.

It took a while to realise that something like this could happen to **me!** I started fighting desperately against the illness - wanting once more to be "*in control!*" I start off by seeing a homeopath who diagnosed me as having a toxic inflamed body, Candida, an upside down hormonal system, and irritable bowel. My far sight started blurring now, my lymph glands were often tender and inflamed, I bruised easily, I became very sensitive to noise, crowded places, too cold or too hot weather, and bright lights. I felt 'fluey' all the time with watery sore eyes, headaches, migraines and the total brain fog. I suffered with depression, extreme anxiety, and could no longer read a book from front to back. I could not concentrate or comprehend things. Most of the time I preferred a quiet routine with everything in its place – the slightest change would stress me out. Even my sleeping pattern went from being a deep sleeper to sleeping lightly.

Slow to think – slow to move – I no longer recognised my 'self' – I was like an old sick woman with Alzheimer's.

Fortunately I have always been a person with an enquiring mind, a love for reading, and a stubbornness that kept me searching for answers. I did not accept someone else telling me "there is no cure for this". I also always *believed* I would get well again. Over the last eight years later, I have written and *self published* two books and am on my third. The books are a record of my journey to renewed health and wellbeing.

"How did I do it?" you may ask. Well, It was a combination of steps I took. For years I read every book, magazine and pamphlet I could get my hands on and searched the internet. I questioned the various therapists and healers I went to see, but also listened to my inner guide. I watched specific programmes on TV, and kept an open mind. All the while it felt as if I was being nudged along a certain path learning little lessons all the way. Often I would cry out loud "why am I not better yet?" and would lapse again into misery and despondency. My ego self needed to become well quickly to show the world "hey look at me!"

But alas, there was not going to be a quick fix for me. I was forced to slow down and have patience. My inner self was slowly leading me through various levels of consciousness. As I started to take note of my emotions I found myself going deeper and deeper within. I delved into my past and released trapped feelings. I experienced powerful

shifts in my psyche and moved through the various stages of taking responsibility, choosing my response, creating my own reality, accepting the present moment, understanding my resistance and fears, and discovering my inner child. I became the ‘observer’ as Eckhart Tolle describes so beautifully in his book ‘The Power of Now.’”

One of the strange thoughts I often had or ‘felt’ was the fact that this sick person was not really me – the depressed, nervous person who was going through all these different stages was not me – I was only experiencing these things so I could know and understand them. Why? When I started the life coaching it all made sense to me then and I knew without a doubt why I had suffered as I had. I had to really ‘know’ what others were feeling and going through.

I believe any crises or illness can and should be looked at in this way. Ask yourself these questions: what can I learn from this? What changes am I supposed to make in my life? In myself? Through my journey I became far more compassionate, connected, and eventually found an inner peace and contentment. Besides being back up on the mountain or doing virtually anything I wanted, I found my needs much simpler and a strong desire to give back.

My life slowly but surely started turning around – as I was feeling different on the inside, there were amazing changes on the outside. Whatever I needed seemed to flow to me as long as I was ready and I had put the thought ‘out there’ – the answer would come. I also felt a powerful drive to write my stories. I wake up in the mornings with a feeling of excitement once more – and a feeling of being safe and of trusting the natural flow in life. I think more and more people are now ready and searching for these answers. My aim now to help others with my books and life coaching, is to *be* the person I was looking for on *my* journey.

Things that can assist someone on this journey are developing the art of being thankful every day and being open to give and receive freely from the wellspring of life. See the differences in others as unique expressions that contribute more colour and fragrance to the world. Be in harmony with all you see. Have the courage to love unconditionally. Allow your intellectual mind to recognize your intuitive perception. See that *you* are not your ‘illness’ – it is just one part of you. Give voice to your feelings and communicate with clarity and openness. Be aware that all experiences you come into contact with, are a reflection of your own projected thoughts and emotions. Release attachment, recognizing that it is the source of all suffering. Be open to new ideas and spiritual concepts. Contemplate the impermanent nature of reality. Feel free to express your creativity with unrestricted enthusiasm and joy. Accepting the river as it flows is relief from stress. Relief from stress is freedom. It is the ability to breathe deeply and enjoy the river. It is relaxing into the present moment.

And remember this: Happiness cannot be travelled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude.

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