

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome – A Patient’s Perspective.

To be quite frank, I didn’t believe that I needed help. So I had had ME for seven and a half years, but I had accepted the illness along with the restrictions it imposed on my life. I was managing it well and achieving sustainable progress. What’s more, I was in a sound emotional state, optimistic and surrounded by a team of close and supportive friends and family.

However, my Doctor suggested that this grieving process would unlock some energy tied up in my emotions, generally boost my immune system and help me to deal with life better. That’s what persuaded me to give it a go – its modesty. There were no miraculous claims that it would cure my illness. I had tried my fair share of so-called ‘wonder potions and therapies’ and none had delivered on their promises.

So what did this common sense approach do for me? Initially, it made me list every loss that I had suffered in my life and my corresponding feelings. This separated my confusion of emotions and gave them a basic order. This exercise of simplification enabled me to join up the dots – linking past disappointments and reactions with current ones, thereby revealing my central triggers. I was particularly encouraged that it gave justification to my behaviour rather than criticising it. Finally, it detached me from my feelings, making me view myself objectively from the outside and consequently coaxing myself into a better pattern of emotional behaviour. The sessions had empowered me and given me control so that in the end, I was treating myself.

Overall, I like to relate to what “The Seven Stepping Stones Grieving Process” has achieved for me in terms of doing the laundry. Originally, my feelings were an over wrung, tangled, sodden and heavy load of washing, having just gone through the turmoil of the spin cycle. This programme gave me the role of the objective laundry woman, loosening and separating them before hanging them orderly out on the line for a good airing. Now I am still the same load – I still have ME – but I am lighter and free as I sway in the breeze. I am well aware that I will get caught in the odd shower or two and get knotted up again in strong gusts of wind. However, that’s the real beauty of this particular approach, it has armed me with a coping strategy for handling any disappointments, no matter how large or small, that I encounter in the future.

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