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My journey...Chronic Fatigue Syndrome & Fibromyalgia

I recall at the age of 17 my journey began in search for answers about an illness that doctors knew little about . . . and this seemed to go on for years and years.

I had flu and mono-like symptoms and low-grade fevers on a daily basis. At one point, I began to think that there was either something wrong with my thermometer or that my body operates at an abnormal temperature! I believe that because I knew I had to go to work everyday, my survival instinct kicked in and my situation transformed into what Professor Nelson refers to as "Adaptation Phase." I got used to my symptoms and learned to cope and deal with them, yet my journey for answers continued.

I went to doctors on a "regular basis," and they in turn gave me prescriptions on a "regular basis." Of course, I should have known better. They were usually antibiotics, painkillers, muscle relaxers, or anti-depressants (even though I knew I was far from depressed!). The list went on as you can imagine, or most likely have experienced yourself. The vicious cycle continued. I would go back and they would try different medications and different suggestions. One doctor even suggested a vacation and, guess what, I certainly enjoyed taking two weeks off due to medical leave, but even that didn't fix my problem. Oh boy, did I learn my lesson the hard way. I should say that it was a great learning experience, which has brought me to where I am today.

I finally went to my doctor one day, sat him down to inform him that "his" method did not work, and demanded answers. (I really wanted to say much more to him, about what I thought of doctors, but I behaved!) I think he finally got so sick of me that he conceded to running some investigative tests on me.

He called me one day and told me that one of my tests came out positive and showed that I had the Epstein-Barr virus. I was so thrilled to finally be "*diagnosed*" with an illness, thinking that next he would give me one of his prescriptions and it would fix all of my problems. However, I asked him what to do from there, and he replied, "*I don't know!*" Apparently, at that time the medical establishment did not know enough information about the Epstein-Barr virus, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or Fibromyalgia.

On that day, I finally lost all hope in western medicine, and I decided to toss his number and begin my own journey to find the answers and begin the healing process.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is described as a condition characterized by symptoms of prolonged debilitating fatigue, which is not relieved by rest. This is not your usual "I feel tired" fatigue. This is more of, "I cannot move," or "I cannot lift my arm because I am so fatigued." Fibromyalgia is a chronic disorder characterized by tenderness in localized areas of the neck, spine, shoulders, and hips. These are referred to as the tender points or pressure points. They basically call it the "all-over aching disease."

The exact cause of CFS or Fibromyalgia is unknown. There is a wide range of stressors and symptoms, which may be contributing factors. The list of contributing factors is long, and may be the reason why recently everyone has been labeled as having CFS or Fibromyalgia. They are the following: candidiasis, parasites, bacterial and viral infections, yeast infections, sinusitis, migraines, brain fog, weak immune system, hormonal imbalances, hypothalamic dysfunction, heavy metal toxicity, mercury, enzyme deficiencies, allergies, nutritional deficiencies, toxicity, thyroid problems, digestive problems, environmental stressors, diet and nutrition, poor sleep patterns, sensitivity to light, psychological and mental factors, and depression associated with this illness. Sufferers of CFS and Fibromyalgia need to know that they are not crazy and not imagining these symptoms, which is often what they've been led to believe from the medical community, no matter how many times they tell others of these symptoms. Mitigating these symptoms should include modifying certain personality characteristics that contribute to these illnesses, and resolving to not carry the weight of the world on your back-which may be hard for some to adjust to!

Understanding one's health often requires actions beyond the wisdom of the medical establishment-as I'm sure you already know, or you would not even be getting this newsletter. It is very important for our clients to "learn the lessons of the disease" so the same lifestyle and emotional patterns are not repeated in

the future. A more proactive approach to health education is necessary to research the alternatives. The answers or solutions often already exist, waiting to be uncovered, and it is our job as "healers and educators" to find those answers. I used to wake up every morning with tears in my eyes and say, "why me?" Now instead, I wake up in the morning and the first thing I do is thank God every day for my health and the many experiences and lessons that I have learned through this very long journey.

