Being Diagnosed With Multiple Sclerosis and Refusing To Live With It

I thought I was healthy; I was forty-one years old and in the prime of my life. I worked out regularly, often with my new husband and at times with a trainer. On the weekend, my husband and I would ride 30-40 miles through the vineyards of Germany on our bicycles. I would have classified myself as healthy, maybe even very healthy.

I ate relatively well most of the time, at least compared to other people. I was always conscious of what I ate and usually chose the low sugar, low-fat option if there was one. I didn’t drink regular soda and only drank diet soda when water wasn’t available. As I said, I thought I was healthy.

The first sign that something was wrong came when my husband and I were on vacation in Greece on Valentines Day, 2014. As we walked back to the hotel after a long day of sightseeing, I noticed a slight limp on my right side. I also kept tripping on the sidewalk, and it was hard for me to keep up with my husband. The fourth time I tripped, my husband looked at me and said, “What is wrong with you?” I shrugged my shoulders and laughed. I chalked it up to the uneven sidewalks in Athens and maybe the wine.

I thought I was healthy…
That next week I noticed that with each day my limp got noticeably worse. I thought it must be the long-standing hip problem I’d had since my high school cheerleading days. I saw two different orthopedic doctors and got an MRI of my hip. They told me that eventually I would need a right hip replacement, but I needed to wait longer because I was too young. One orthopedic surgeon even watched as I walked down

the hall and commented, “You do have a limp, don’t you?” but he didn’t offer any suggestions or advice.

About a week after the last orthopedic appointment, I realized that my worsening limp was not due to my bad hips. I was getting up an hour earlier than usual because I had become so slow at getting ready for work. I tried to dry my hair, something I’ve done a million times before, but the brush was so heavy in my right hand, I literally couldn’t keep it above my head. When I held the brush up, it would drop onto my head.

That same day, I was trying to sign documents at work. Again, it was something I’ve done a million times, but when my brain told my hand to sign, my hand wasn’t responding. I watched my hand move in slow motion.

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During that same week, I started bumping into walls. I lost all sense of where my body was in space. I lost my balance while walking around a corner or while walking down the sidewalk. I would have to reach out and grab something to stabilize myself or use my forearms against the wall to prevent myself from falling. I also had to hold onto a dresser or nightstand to brace myself when I got out of bed and when I put my clothes on, or I would fall. By the end of the week, I had bruises up and down my forearms. I worked as a Domestic Violence Victim Advocate, and I was covered with bruises. I kept getting strange looks, and a few people even questioned me about the bruises.

Once I realized that my hand was involved, I immediately suspected MS. Ten years earlier, I was diagnosed with optic neuritis, inflammation of the optic nerve, which is often a precursor to MS. One morning, ten years ago, I noticed the lower left quadrant of my left eye was completely black. I saw a couple doctors and was diagnosed with optic neuritis. After three days of IV steroids, it went away. I followed up with a neurologist who gave me an MRI and told me that I did have brain lesions, but they were small and were not in the right location of the brain to justify an MS diagnosis. He didn’t seem to be worried about it. He told me to watch it. I followed up with him for a few years, and then I stopped. I had actually forgotten about it, until now.

I am right handed but, because of my progressively worsening paralysis, I found myself compensating with my left. This was only three weeks after the first symptoms. I would try to pick up something with my right hand; it would fall. Soon I was brushing my teeth, maneuvering the mouse, and even signing my name with my left hand. My handwriting looked like a third grader’s, no matter which hand I used.

It took me twice as long to do anything: to shower, get dressed, walk to the bathroom, walk to the car. Every time I would lie down, my legs would go into action. Relentless leg spasticity disturbed my sleep all night long. About every 30 seconds my right leg, and sometimes my left as well, would contract intensely, then release. I was exhausted before I even got out of bed in the morning. I didn’t want to go on. I didn’t know who I was anymore. My body had betrayed me.

Immediately after I suspected MS, I went to see my doctor and begged for a neurology consult. I knew that what I was experiencing was neurological, and I was pretty confident it was MS due to my history. I asked for IV steroids immediately. My doctor laughed at me. She didn’t believe me. She said no one was going to give me IV steroids. She called me hysterical and gave me a prescription for Valium, which I willingly took at the time. I responded to this by doing what I had started doing so often; I burst into tears. Finally, I was referred to a neurologist: my appointment was scheduled two weeks from that day.

During the fifth week, I continued to research conventional treatment for MS. I felt scared and hopeless as I became more and more disabled. I couldn’t walk up or down stairs without using a cane and holding onto the rail. I had already fallen three times. I couldn’t raise my toes on my right foot. This made driving difficult and frankly dangerous. I had to lift my whole foot and put it on the pedals. I was rapidly losing control over my body.

I couldn’t wait two weeks for the appointment. I walked into the neurologist’s office a week before my scheduled appointment, and surprisingly, the doctor agreed to see me. I just couldn’t take it anymore –not knowing what my body was doing, getting worse each day. I was a mess. Through my tears, I explained my history to doctor number four. I pressed for IV steroids because I knew in my heart that this was MS. He scheduled me for two MRI’s for the following week, one of the brain and one of the spine, both with contrast.

During this first appointment with the neurologist, I mentioned that I had been researching MS on the Internet and that I kept seeing stories of women who’s MS symptoms had improved simply by making dietary changes. I asked him what he thought about cutting out meat, processed food, sugar, dairy, and gluten. My doctor told me that there was no evidence that diet had any impact on the course of the disease or the severity of symptoms.

During the next week, I got the two MRI’s and kept the initial appointment with my neurologist, which was now our followup appointment. I was officially diagnosed with MS on March 20, 2014. This was six weeks after the onset of symptoms. MS had hit me fast and hard. I was still working, but I couldn’t concentrate. I couldn’t write. It was hard to type. I could barely walk. Some co-workers were questioning whether I should continue to work. My future was bleak.

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I had training for work that had been pre-planned six months

previously, and I was scheduled to go to the States in two days. My neurologist told me that we would talk about preventative medication when I returned from my trip in two weeks. I received 1000 mg of IV prednisone that day, 2000 mg the next morning, and oral prednisone to take with me on my trip.

My head was spinning. I didn’t know how I was going to make it through a 12-hour flight let alone concentrate on spouse abuse training. During my trip, an airline escort had to meet me at the gate with a wheelchair and wheel me to the connecting flight. All I could think of was how I was going to continue to deteriorate, and I wondered what my future would look like. I spent the majority of the next two weeks reading about MS.

I returned to Germany two weeks later and started taking Tecfidera, a preventative MS medication, twice daily. I was also taking a muscle relaxer, an anti-anxiety medication, and a pain killer for the severe leg cramps. In addition, I had been taking a twice-daily steroid inhalant for asthma for more than ten years, and I kept a rescue inhaler with me at all times to use as needed. I also suffered from severe migraines since childhood, and I took Imitrex for this as needed.

In my research of conventional treatment for MS, all I read about was how the disease was “incurable” and about how I would need to set up a plan for “progressive disability” and “wheelchairs, home health aides, and Social Security Disability.” For about three days, I was consumed with dark thoughts. I didn’t want my new husband to have to care for me like that. For those three days, I wanted to die. Then I continued my research.

When I read about natural remedies for MS, I started to regain hope. I realized that the conventional medical community didn’t know what caused MS and didn’t believe there was a cure. I kept finding examples of how diet changes not only improved MS symptoms, but also cured it. As I read, I started to believe that I could get healthy, truly healthy. I also started to take action. I maintained the diet changes I had started and learned more about real health every day. I chose to continue to improve my diet; because it was the one thing I had control over in this whole situation.

I then remembered my old friend, Michael Edwards, had a real interest in alternative health care. He asked me to read several articles in his magazine, Organic Lifestyle Magazine. I began to learn more and more about health, real health, and how it is intimately connected to what we put in our mouth. Together Michael and I developed a nutritional and detoxification plan for me.

I noticed improvements right away. Just as I had declined a little bit every day, I noticed that I got a little bit stronger and more stable every day. I soon noticed that my other health ailments were improving, too. I no longer wheezed or suffered from migraines. I learned how to heal my gut from 20 years of Tylenol and Advil abuse. I learned how to feed my body nutrient-dense, anti-inflammatory foods that would aid in my healing. Many people looked at my salads and smoothies and said “You are so disciplined!” I typically replied, “My mobility is a good motivator.”

I stayed on Tecfidera from April until November 2014 and then made the decision to stop it. At first I was scared to make this decision. I had to get past the brainwashing; the belief that I had to take what the doctor prescribed. I had been able to wean myself off all of the other pharmaceuticals I had been taking, including the asthma medicine and migraine pills, which I had taken for more than 30 years. I was able to do this simply by adding organic, raw produce-more vegetables than fruit- to my diet.

I got confirmation that this was what was helping me whenever I would veer off the diet in any way. Once, about 45 days into eating only raw produce (organic when possible) I went to a going away luncheon for a close friend. The menu was abbreviated, so there wasn’t anything on it I could eat. I chose to eat a cheese pizza with whatever raw veggies they could put on top. Even though I only ate the top of the pizza (cheese, onion, and mushrooms), before I left the restaurant my forehead was pounding. I had an immediate, physical reaction to either the dairy or the gluten.

More recently, I ate couscous for several days, not knowing that it was wheat. This time I didn’t get a headache; I had a full relapse of my MS symptoms. I noticed that my right foot had dropped, and I was tripping. I also had to stabilize myself when I rounded corners like before. I noticed a significant decrease in my energy and decreased ability to go up or down stairs. When I mentioned this to Michael, the first thing he said was, “Tell me exactly what you’ve eaten for the last four days.” When I stopped and thought about it, I realized couscous had been the only change in my diet.

There was another time, right after I finished the first two phases of my detox program (about 30 days of eating raw, organic produce) that I went out to eat with some girlfriends. I did this every Friday, so I knew how to stick to my program at a restaurant. On that day, however, we got to talking about how well I was doing. I shared with them how I was able to get off all of the medications simply by changing what I ate. I told them I was better – walking better, feeling better, and having more energy. I thought, “I’ve been good. I’ve stuck to my program so well I deserve some baklava.” It was delicious, but I couldn’t sleep that night because my stomach was turning in knots, and my legs, which had been peaceful for three weeks,started to spasm again. I told myself, “Baklava doesn’t taste this good. Nothing does.”

The radiologist looked at me and said, “You’re better!”

Four months after being diagnosed, it was time for a repeat MRI. My neurologist had said that the most I could hope for was no new lesions on my brain. Not only were there no new lesions, it showed no evidence of inflammation and the lesions I had previously were significantly reduced. The radiologist looked at me and said, “You’re better!”

Recently, I had a blood test that confirmed that the two indicators that show inflammation in the body were completely normal. These indicators were extremely elevated in March but normal in November. I have no doubt that it is due to the lifestyle changes I’ve made that have contributed to my healing.

It’s now been ten months since my initial diagnosis, and for the first time in my life, I am no longer an asthmatic. I don’t take asthma or migraine medicine or any pharmaceuticals for that matter. I only take natural supplements when needed to supplement my diet.

I use a good, whole food, nutrition supplement (Total Nutrition Formula) in my smoothie every morning and munch on a big salad all throughout the day and into the evening. My salad is full of 10 or more different organic vegetables and 3-4 different types of leafy greens with lots of garlic, onions, and turmeric. After all of that, if I am still hungry (and often I’m not) I’ll have some cooked quinoa mixed with raw garlic and any other raw vegetables. I drink a gallon of pure, living water every day (I also make this cranberry lemonade). To my water, I add either organic apple cider vinegar and organic strap molasses or organic lemon and cranberry juice sweetened with stevia and spiced with cayenne pepper.

As I continue on this healing journey, I continue to learn and make improved health choices. I learned that couscous is wheat, and it will imitate an MS flare up. I learned that nothing is as good as true health, not even baklava.

Note: I owe so much of my success in healing to the following article in Organic Lifestyle Magazine and the following supplements from Green Lifestyle Market. Much love to Michael Edwards, Chief Editor. Thank you!

Further Reading:

- *80% Raw Food Diet*
- *Inexpensive Easy Detox the One Gallon Challenge*
- *How to Kill Candida and Balance Your Inner Ecosystem*
- *Doc Shillington's Total Body Cleanse*
- *Budwig Cancer Cure*
- *Cure Cancer Naturally*
- *Garlic, the Most Amazing Herb on the Planet*
- *Turmeric – Learn More about This Ayurvedic Herb*

Recommended Supplements:

- Shillington's Blood Detox Formula
- Shillington's Blood Detox Tea
- Shillington's Total Nutrition Formula
- HM Complex – Pure Encapsulations
- Shillington's Liver & Gallbladder Formula
- Shillington's Liver and Gallbladder Tea
- Shillington's Echinacea Plus
- Formula SF722 – Thorne Research
- Shillington's Intestinal Cleanse Formula
- FloraMend Prime Probiotic – Thorne Research
- MicroDefense – Pure Encapsulations
- Liquid Light – Sunwarrior