

Beth's story:

I have been sick for so long, I can't pinpoint when each set of problems started. I can say that the downhill slide occurred in the fall of 1997 after my third c-section. It was a long process, and now, 10+ years later, I have a hard time believing that it's over!

Three months ago, I was the sickest 'functional' person I knew. I had diarrhea six to eight times a day, even when I was careful to eat 'right'. Any form of physical exertion brought on bowel incontinence. My joints and muscles hurt, my head, hands, and feet were itchy. I had unpredictable twitches and spasms in my muscles. My gums bled, I had 'female problems', and I was bloated, swollen, and sore. I had frequent (constant) respiratory problems bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma-like symptoms, and was on antibiotics regularly for these. I spent my nights in a hot tub the only relief I had to look forward to. There were many days when I came home from work and took a two-hour nap, because I couldn't do anything else!

I still managed to attend sports events for my three kids, cook dinner a couple times a week, and fold an occasional load of laundry. The things I had stopped doing, though, were legion. I couldn't walk stairs, stand to talk, walk with the dog, wash dishes, clean house, concentrate on paperwork, or go out to visit socially. I quit my hobbies, my kids took up a lot of the house slack, and my husband went out by himself to visit family and friends. Every bit of my energy went into making it through each day, and there was nothing left.

I had more 'ologists' than anyone else I knew, and I was only 37. Between them, my family doctor, neurologist (2 of them), dermatologist, rheumatologist, gastroenterologist, orthopedist, pulmonologist, and dentist were at a loss. They all had different names for parts of what was wrong, but none of them could stop it, fix it, or put it all together and make sense of it. Over and over, after sitting in a waiting room of people who at least LOOKED sick, I would hear, "the tests all came back normal, and when that happens, we call this set of symptoms X. There's not much we can do, except treat the symptoms." At one point, I was taking seven prescriptions (14 pills) plus three lotions / potions for my skin daily, and B-12 shots twice weekly. All that, for what no one could fix, cure, or even name!

I finally went to my family doctor. I explained that I felt like there had to be something in common. He took three weeks to review all of my records (the paper file in his office alone is about 8 inches thick, he has the past 5 years electronically, and I gave him the records from all of my specialists to look at, as well). On my return, we went over everything together, and he agreed we were missing something. He suggested I set up a visit with an internist at Johns Hopkins or the MAYO clinic.

I set up an appointment to go to Johns Hopkins in the spring of 2007. I had to gather all of my records and have them sent, and wait for them to be reviewed by four different doctors, before they could decide what to do with me. Setting up this appointment took three months! Two days before I was to fly out, the internist's office called to tell me that after reviewing my file a second time, Dr. XYZ didn't feel there was anything he could do that hadn't already been done, but he did have two suggestions for me. He suggested I get a full psychological evaluation, and see a nutritionist for a weight loss program.

I did go see a psychiatrist, and his evaluation was essentially that I was sick physically, but surprisingly well, mentally. Needless to say, my family doctor was furious and so was I (well, okay, I would have been, if I had had the energy!). He suggested I go to the MAYO clinic, as he had had good luck with them previously.

In the early fall of that year, I got my appointment for the week before Thanksgiving. My husband called a friend of his to see if he could get help with hotel rooms for the trip, which the hospital warned would be anywhere from three days to two weeks, for the first trip. Luckily for me, his friend is a patient at The Center, and suggested I try it before I went to the Mayo Clinic. After talking with him, and hearing his story, it still took me a few weeks to call and set up an appointment with Mary Ann. To be honest, I didn't believe in energy work, or many alternative / complementary practices. I had seen someone in Oswego several years before, and she had given me bowel cleanses, supplements, etc., which had no effect. I figured it was worth a try though, since he had such great success with The Center. I canceled my appointment with the Mayo Clinic.

My first appointment changed my attitude about energy medicine forever. When I left, I felt better than I had in years. Not great, but better. More rested, less stressed, more positive. Mary Ann warned me about some of the possible side effects, but I had few. At my second appointment, I again saw Mary Ann, and I could feel things changing. Meeting Amanda was next. Amanda and I talked a long time about my symptoms. Amanda put me on an anti-inflammatory diet, and a few supplements. Both Mary Ann and Amanda also had suggestions for small changes that could help and I was willing to try anything at that point!

With Mary Ann and Amanda, they weren't so anxious to 'label' what was wrong, they were just focused on fixing it!

Within two weeks of beginning the diet, I had lost 13 pounds, and was off most of my medications, including my B-12 injections! By the time I went to see Mary Ann and Amanda again 8 weeks later, I had made peace with the dietary restrictions, and started having fun with cooking new things, or old things in new ways. I had lost about 20 pounds, and hadn't seen a doctor since the first visit with Mary Ann! I had no diarrhea, no nausea, no cramping, bloating, tenderness, bleeding, bruising, respiratory problems, twitches, spasms, or incontinence! I was taking NO medications. I was absolutely faithful to my instructions, except one night. The days following, I felt just as bad as I ever had, except worse, because I wasn't used to the pain anymore. Needless to say, I went right back on the diet!

I started taking the stairs occasionally, cleaning the house myself, dancing in the kitchen with my daughter, and cooking a lot. My kids and I even gutted out our basement in a couple of hours one weekend!

I have a couple of small problems that remain, and am continuing to work with them, but I feel better now than I have in - well, at least ten years! Thanks to Mary Ann and Amanda, I am now starting to make plans and set goals I would have never considered before!