Having Fibromyalgia and Faith

by ADRIEL MALDONADO

Having Faith Despite Fibromyalgia

I am of the opinion that an important aspect of healing, regardless of what the ailment is, is faith.

What exactly is faith? Many would associate that word with religion. One dictionary defines it as "strong belief or trust in someone or something; belief in the existence of God; strong religious feelings or beliefs; a system of religious beliefs."

The Bible defines it as "the assured expectation of what is hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities that are not seen."

The fact is faith comes in many shapes and forms. Faith can be placed in anything, such as God, doctors, other people, even yourself. What happens though, when you choose to have faith in all of these things? Your outlook gets a little brighter, that's what.

I am sure some will read that and think I'm crazy, or naive. And that is fine. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, and you may think fibromyalgia and faith don't go together. But allow me though to share with you why I choose to hold on to faith, and how it has helped me on my journey with fibro.

God

My primary faith is, always has been, and always will be in God. As a child I was taught about him, and I believed it all. I had no reason to believe otherwise. But it wasn't until my teen years that I began to study and research for myself and really came to put true faith in God.

I began to view him as a real person, as a friend, and as a loving father. I learned that when I trusted in him he helped me in very real ways. This is especially beneficial when dealing with a chronic illness like fibromyalgia.

I know that I do not have the strength to bear this burden alone, it is only with the help of my God that I can endure with a positive outlook. As Philippians 4:13 so aptly says, "For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power." I also have faith in "realities that are not seen."

Why, you may ask? I have this faith because Jehovah God has never let me down. I have this faith because when I read the Bible, and the corresponding history, I recognize that God has always been faithful to his servants in the past, so there is no reason to believe that he will do anything differently in the future.

And just what has God promised us for the future? "He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." - Revelation 21:4.

That is what my faith and hope rests on. This faith keeps me going strong, always remembering that what I am suffering is only temporary.

Doctors

I tend to have a love/hate relationship with doctors. I dislike doctors that are narrow minded, dismissive, prescription pushers, or that are only in it for the money. However I have heard of – and even met a few – doctors that genuinely care about their patients and want to help them, and these I love.

I know that there are doctors out there who are willing to help patients with natural methods wherever possible. I have faith that these good doctors are out there and that I will eventually be able to find the doctor I need to help me.

I also have faith that as time goes on more good doctors will be entering the medical field, ready and able to help all the chronic illness sufferers. I have faith that the more that is learned about fibromyalgia, the more doctors will be able to help us. This faith keeps me from giving up. This faith keeps me from giving in to my illness.

Next page: having faith in other people and in yourself.

Other People

At times people can say unkind and insensitive things. At times people make me feel like I have to prove that I really am sick. At times the hardest part of having a chronic illness is the judgment from others. And this may not always be verbal – you can tell from their facial expressions, by their tone of voice, that they think you're exaggerating.

But I have found that overall, people really do mean well. There are many people who have been instrumental in my healing process. I am not sure how I would have been able to get through some of the trials that I have, without the help and support from my family and friends.

I also know that even when someone does say something hurtful, it most likely is due to ignorance. I have faith that the more fibro sufferers speak out and raise awareness, the less we will have to endure these painful comments from the uninformed.

I have faith that the good in people will prevail. My faith in the good in others helps me endure the unkindness I meet.

I have faith that more chronic illness sufferers will step forward to share their story. This will, in turn, will help more people to grasp just what we are dealing with.

I have faith that when more people are conscious of this, the more understanding and accepting they will become of our limitations, all while being more appreciative of what abilities and strengthen we do have.

Yourself

This is a hard one for me. I have had low self-esteem for most of my life. I honestly thought that thinking well of myself was a sin.

But I now perceive that there are instances where it is necessary to have faith in yourself in order to heal and to cope. I have had to learn how to do this. I have learned that I am much stronger and more capable than I had given myself credit for.

I have faith in myself that I can continue to survive. I have faith in myself that I can continue to fight, no matter how difficult it gets. I have faith that I can continue to smile through the pain. And most importantly, I have faith

that when I am faced with challenging decisions regarding my health, I will be able to make the best possible choice.

The bottom line is this: fibromyalgia is a big challenge and each one of us has to figure out what will help us to withstand the physical and emotional pain that comes with it. Each of us has to find that thing we can put our confidence in. We have to find that thing that keeps us fighting from one day to the next.

For me, a major aspect of that is my strong, unwavering faith. My faith allows me to look towards the future with a positive outlook. And isn't that what all of us need?