

## Chapter 16

# I'm Just Dying to Get Better!

2002

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*WARNING! Asking God for the “full experience” may be hazardous to your health. In 2000, I told my friend Betty that I had asked God for the full experience. In disbelief, she looked at me and said, “You asked for the full experience?” Not realizing what I had done, I proudly answered, “Yes!” She reacted by just rolling her eyes and slowly shaking her head, for she fully understood the consequences of what I had asked for.*

It seems as if whenever I am in need or in danger, the “right” person always walks into my life. In late December, that person turned out to be Bob Morton. When Bob and I were first introduced, we were attracted to each other like magnets. Unlike Joe and me, Bob and I were of “like” mind, meaning we shared many of the same beliefs. Later on, Bob proved to be a saint and my guardian angel. He must have really cared about me, because every night he drove over 40 miles round trip to come out and take care of me.

Since I could never sleep, Bob would come over late and fix meals for me, then we would spend the rest of the night talking. We discussed many topics ranging from Atlantis, to the origins of the Bible, and then the Illuminati. I never got tired of listening to him, because I had never met anyone as intelligent or as fascinating as Bob. He had been a world traveler and was also a member of *Mensa*. He proudly wore a medal on a gold chain around his neck which he said he had won by taking first place in a nationwide *Mensa* contest.

We only had one difference of opinion—what Dave (the psychic) had said was attacking me (a virus). Bob disagreed. He blamed my illness on the medication I was taking. Bob would re-enforce how important it was for me to build my immune system instead of suppressing it.

Now I was beginning to agree with Bob that my only chance for survival was to protect and build my immune system instead of destroying it. I now realized I had to find a different doctor who offered an alternative treatment than immune-suppressing drugs.

By March 2002, (without my doctor's approval) I weaned myself off of the steroids. Now my immune system kicked in and was functioning, but this proved to be devastating. All these past months, the drugs had been masking what was *really* going on in my body. Now, to my horror, the terrible damage the "monster" had done was revealed to me.

I cried when I saw what happened to my hands. I couldn't make a fist, because they were too swollen and stiff. My hands looked like lobster claws, and my feet were swollen, too. In fact, I was unable to even wear shoes. I had to wear flip-flops. I also had neuropathy in both my feet and my hands.

By now, I was experiencing chronic pain. Even rolling over in bed was excruciatingly painful. My only relief was to lie perfectly still, flat on my back, with my arms straight at my side. Then almost every night, I would wake up drenched in sweat, cold and shivering with my bed sheets "soaking wet." (Note: This was from low grade fevers breaking, and this would go on for months and months.) Most of the other time, I couldn't sleep. Even if I were exhausted and wanted to sleep, I couldn't. From lack of sleep, dark circles began appearing under my eyes. I had also reached the point where I lost interest in food. Not long afterwards from not eating, my body began to slowly waste away, and I looked as if I had AIDS.

Even though I didn't realize it at the time, I was also experiencing severe depression. Looking back, I can honestly describe what severe depression feels like. It's losing interest in everything around you. Surprisingly, TV couldn't even hold my attention. Nothing but a fire lit under me could motivate or arouse me.

The following scenario best describes what severe depression felt like to me: A man walks up to me and points a gun at me and says he's going to kill me. I then beg him to do it. I tell him he'd be doing me a favor.

As the weeks rolled by, I kept canceling my appointments with my doctor. I was a coward and afraid of what she would say when she saw the inflammation and the damage to my joints. She would know immediately what I had done—that I had stopped taking the drugs. She would then "hit the roof."

After getting off the drugs, and seeing what the "monster" had really done, I was fearful I was going to die unless something short of

a miracle happened. That's when I made an appointment to see my father's pain doctor.

When I saw the pain doctor for the first time, he took one look at my hands and said, "I can see that you have nerve damage." The doctor ordered lots of tests to try to find out what was causing my symptoms. Thank goodness he did not believe in prescribing unnecessary drugs, until he could find out the cause of my symptoms. At that time, he only prescribed pain medication.

He ordered nerve and muscle tests, an MRI of my brain, and blood tests. The results of the nerve and muscle tests revealed that I had muscle and myelin sheath damage. The MRI revealed that I had lesions and cysts in the right frontal lobe of my brain. (See Exhibit 2, Medical Records.)

Overall, the results from the tests stumped the doctor. He and his staff were baffled and couldn't figure out what exactly was causing my symptoms. They admitted they couldn't attach a name to it.

At that time, the pain doctor referred me to a "top" neurologist in the St. Louis area, which proved to be both good and bad news. The bad news was the first available appointment was in November, which was over six months away. The good news was that I was not going to be forced to take immune-suppressing drugs for awhile. This meant I could try to keep building my immune system to fight what I believed was really attacking me—the "Stealth" virus.

For the next 12 weeks, I had physical therapy three times a week to strengthen the muscles in my arms and legs. My fingers were useless. I couldn't even button my shirt or grasp a zipper to zip up my pants. I could not even turn a door knob to open a door. I needed assistance to walk, and I used a wheelchair or walker whenever I went outside.

While this was all going on, Bob was still by my side. At night, when we were together, my teeth would chatter and I would shake uncontrollably from the pain, the chills and the fever. The pain pills didn't help. I'm sure Bob felt helpless. All he could do was hold me in his arms and comfort me. Here I was the one who was so sick, but I felt sorry for him. He was watching someone he cared about waste away right in front of him, and there was nothing he could do.

Now I realize Bob must have really loved me, because he refused to leave St. Louis and abandon me. (Note: During this time period, jobs were scarce, and Bob was self-employed. The only good paying

jobs were out of town.) I didn't know it then, but Bob was in a "pinch." His savings were running out, but he never let me know. Looking back, I now know that he had made a big sacrifice for me when he chose to stay in St. Louis to take care of me.

Then November came around, and my long-awaited appointment with the neurologist was finally here. All of us, including my family, believed this prominent doctor would have the answers. My sister, who was a nurse, went with me to my appointment, because we thought she would better understand what the doctor had to say. On the day of the appointment, though, I had a premonition that the office visit was going to be a disappointment. Unfortunately, I was right.

The long-awaited appointment started off with a resident interviewing me. He turned out to be very unsympathetic and arrogant, because the first words out of his mouth were, "You're wasting our time. You're a classic case of rheumatoid arthritis!" His diagnosis made me angry, and I fired back, "How dare you say this, after I waited seven months to be here!" I just couldn't believe this doctor's insolence. Frustrated, I wanted to scream at him, "Didn't you read my medical history? I have lesions in my brain! I have nerve damage! How can you tell me I have rheumatoid arthritis without even examining me?" We were definitely starting off on the wrong foot.

The resident then began to scold me, because I wouldn't take immune-suppressing drugs. Using a scare tactic approach, he predicted, "You're going to die if you don't take drugs!" By now, I was madder than a hornet, and I snapped back, "I would rather die this way than *your* way!"

Obviously, this interview was going nowhere. I was acting like a brat, and the resident was just as guilty. Making matters worse, I told him I believed I was being attacked by a virus. Hearing this, he just sat back in his chair and stared at me as if I were "mad." It's a good thing patients have rights, because I believe he would have had me committed right then and there and locked up in a psych ward.

At last, the neurologist made his "grand" entrance. I became even more disheartened as the neurologist didn't even acknowledge me. Instead, he immediately proceeded to tap my body parts with a reflex hammer. Thank God the tapping finally stopped, after which I was instructed to go to the x-ray department for some x-rays of my wrists. After that over, I was told to report to the lab to have blood drawn.

In the lab, the technician drew a total of 15 vials of blood from my arm. After the blood work was done, my sister and I left and drove home. What a day this had turned out to be! Even though I was disappointed, I was relieved that this doctor's appointment was finally over.

Once I got home, now more than ever, I had to defend myself. My family was now on the side of the resident and were pressuring me to take immune-suppressing drugs again. I was stubborn and refused to even negotiate or listen. I stood my ground as I told them, "It's my life and I'll do with it as I please!"

I am not completely stupid, because I did realize I needed help. So who did I turn to? None other than Dave, the one person who could tell me what was REALLY going on. So the next day, November 11, I called him. Dave had not heard from me since October 1, 2001, when he had first told me I was being attacked by the "Stealth" virus. Again, not waiting for Dave to even say hello, I desperately cried out, "What is wrong with me?" Without wasting any time, he said, "You have a virus in your nerves. If it goes to your heart, it will kill you."

By now, I believed in and completely trusted Dave, even more than I trusted Bob or my pain doctor. At this time, Dave was my only hope and my only life line and direct access to God. And I KNEW that God wasn't going to let me die!

*AUTHOR'S NOTE: If you are on medication, please do not do what I did. Do not wean yourself off of drugs without professional supervision. This is dangerous. I was lucky and by the grace of God survived to write about it.*

