

What the nitty gritty of my experience of Chronic Fatigue is like.

Firstly, if you resonate with any of what I describe, I want to tell you whole heartedly that you are not alone. I have been through it. I know people who have had the same experiences, and only when someone 'got it' did I feel my experience was validated. I hope that this can be that for you as well. For me it came with relief. Relief from the constant internal wrestling of an idea about myself that I didn't want to be true: That I was lazy. That life was a chore, arduous and constantly full of things that I just had to get through. I didn't deserve holidays or a breaks because I hadn't been productive enough.

There is something big at play that has so many of us believing that productivity, without enjoyment, is what life is about. We keep ourselves busy, active and distracted because heaven forbid we are viewed as lazy, unmotivated or not ambitious. Because to be something for someone else may mean we can be loved. There is always a goal. There is always a ball of responsibility that cannot be dropped. Whether is simply keeping the house tidy, or getting enough done at work, working more hours to make enough money, to being everything other people need, to having large projects on the go or juggling any number of responsibilities. – You deserve a break from the mental push to keep on *doing* things.

This, this is the mentality that drove me to burn out. I allowed myself to believe that things needed to be perfect, I needed to do them perfectly, and that ultimately, I needed to be perfect. It is a little tough for me to write this down because I never felt like I was perfect at anything. If I looked at my life, my house was still messy, my dishes were still on the sink. My work was never finished and there was ALWAYS more self-imposed study to be more and better at my job. Or workshops of self-improvement to help me work through my trauma. The act of just trying was not the goal, the finish line was. And it took me years to realise that the whole time, I never once let the finish line stay in the same spot. As soon as I got close to it, I would think of something more, something bigger that I wanted to do and then decide that that was now what I would reach for. And boy did things pile up on my plate!

I did not go to my university graduation. I did not feel like I had deserved it because I had struggled through the course so much! If anything, now, I realise how important that ceremony of completion was.

I know this all sounds crazy, but I am writing it for the possibility that maybe it sounds familiar to someone else. And that maybe you can feel that you are not alone in this.

So, what does it feel like to be burnt out? It feels utterly joyless. It feels like being stressed every second of the day in varying waves no matter what you are doing or where you are. It feels like at any point, something terrible is going to happen and the world around you is going to fall and crush you. It feels like your body is moving through a swamp when you walk. It feels like movement will cause you to pass out. It feels like any kind of walking, further than the living room to the kitchen, means you need to lay down to catch your breath. It feels like life is impossible. It feels like you've

been running in a non-stop marathon for years. Your body is falling apart and yet you still mentally tell yourself that you should be doing more. It feels like your entire world is reduced to the house you live in. It feels like shame. It feels like self-doubt. It feels like you gaslight yourself by questioning 'maybe I'm just being lazy'. It feels isolating. It feels incredibly vulnerable as you try to explain how you are feeling to friends and family who cannot understand the extent of fatigue you are experiencing.

I had been trying to pull myself out of this for years. I was so ashamed because I am a trained practitioner of acupuncture & Chinese medicine. I was getting treatment weekly for years. But any improvements I made were short lived. I would feel better and then just go straight back into working more or seeing friends. I thought I was living a healthy lifestyle. But the one factor that I can now see that kept me in this dark, lonely state of despair, was the relentless attitude that I had to be doing more. Making more of an impact. Being the world's next saviour. And then beating myself up for never even coming close to that. And then beating myself up for not having the inspiration or motivation to be that. I only had enough energy to switch off my brain and watch tv until it was time for bed.

So, if you resonate with this, even on a smaller platform than I am articulating, you are not alone. You are not lazy. You are not worthless. You do not have to DO or BE anything to be accepted, loved, approved of, included or to belong in this world of OURS. You are, and always will be, important and needed in this world and to the people in your life. Even as a couch potato.

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What did I do to lift out of this world of depletion? Many, many things. What did I fail at doing when trying to change? Many, many things. What did I give up to lift out of this world of depletion? Many, many things. I started a Nutritional Balancing Program that involved 2-3 hours of self care a day. Nutrition for my body and mind; check.

I meditated. To confront and let go of the constant mental wrestling for control over what my body was telling me and what I was trying to tell it. To bring together the concept that the two are the same. And to confront the things I needed to take responsibility for. That everything in my life was because of my choices, and only my choices. Check.

I had to give up the idea that I *had* to be more. To be big in my life. Check..... then uncheck... then check... and so on.

I had to give up the idea that I had to be doing something. I let my house be messy. I stopped apologising for that mess. I slept a lot. I had one goal (instead of 50), to truly heal myself and my life; whatever that looked like. And then I hung on for dear life. I had to learn to trust the process. To give up control over everything. To let things fall apart. To let unhelpful relationships fall apart. To put up boundaries between me and those unhealthy relationships that made me feel weak and tired. To let myself fall apart and surrender to my body. Surrender to the fight that I felt like I had been fighting my whole life. Because giving up the fight was the only way to save my life.

As much as I hope that no one else has experienced these things that I have described. If you have and if you do. Please do not give up on yourself. And even if you do not believe it right now, you are

important. You are loved. There is hope for something better than what you are struggling with now. And if you do not believe it, then I will hold that hope for you. Because I know, with out a doubt, through the last 3-5 + years of devastation and struggling, that there is a light at the tunnel. It will not go on forever. If you truly want change, find the support you need to hold you, and let go. Rest. Rest every part of yourself and your soul that has been hurt, traumatised, supressed, neglected, or overused.

If you need help or do not know where to start, here are the things I did that made a dramatic difference to me over the long term. You do not need to do exactly what I did. But it can be a good starting point.

1. Nutritional Balancing Program with Sari Young. This involves getting a Hair Mineral Analysis test. (It was amazing what Sari could tell me about how I was feeling, experiencing and what my views about life were just based on my mineral ratios in my body!) This began the very small amount of trust in the program. I at least knew it was starting from dot one. It was one of the hardest things I have done because I had to build trust in something else that I did not have control in. And it was one of the most confronting things I have done because I had to learn to let go and take responsibility for myself.
2. Acupuncture: this was amazing for softening some extreme symptoms as I detoxed some heavy metals and copper on the NB program. And also settled down my emotions when I was retracing trauma for healing.
3. [highertruth.com.au](http://highertruth.com.au) : this was incredible to learn this style of meditation. I did not have to re-experience traumas to let go of them. And it became a tool for me to be in touch with my emotions. And it was a large factor in learning how to actually surrender, let things be, and then let it go. If you're not local to Mentone VIC then the sessions are available over Zoom.
4. I saw an amazing energy healer who talked me through and helped move deep underlying congestion, resentments, anger and other emotions that were impacting me.
5. I found healthy, supportive, patient and kind friends. These amazing people also let me be genuine with who I am. And let me support them through tough times in their lives. The connection with these people felt warm, comforting and secure in both directions.
6. Once you're feeling emotionally strong enough, Landmark Forum was amazing for me to take responsibility for myself and my life. It is as confronting as it is great. But be in a space where you are ready to make change within yourself. You'll get involved when you're ready. No need to push it on you. It took 1.5 years of encouragement for me to get to a seminar weekend.

And most of all. Set the intention to truly heal. Then trust the process to recovery. You are more powerful in your surrender than in every piece of fighting energy.

P.s.

Someone just pointed out to me recently that I am NOT Chronic Fatigue, it is something I am dealing with. And I'd like to speak about that for a moment. I may not be chronic fatigue, but it is a part of me now, part of my experience. And it has been the catalyst that has deeply changed me, and transformed me. It has been the narrow neck of a glass jar that I had to squeeze through to be free of my constraints. Free of my contorted views of who I thought I was, taught to me at childhood. Free of my never-enough mentality. Free of my mind set of 'love is never free'. Now that I am seeing the light at the end of the glass tunnel, so to speak, I am scared. I am excited. I am a little lost. I am wonderfully overwhelmed by the possibilities of who I am becoming.