

Living with Seizures

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Growing up we tend to take our daily lives for granted. Every morning we wake up, get out of bed, go through our normal routines and then go back to bed. This can go on for years with little thought and no interest in changing habits.

One morning in September 1969, at the age of 20, my routine and life was changed with a big alteration. You see, I got up with plans to go early Christmas shopping with my Aunt Jean. While in the bathroom getting dressed to have a fun day, the next thing I recall I was in a hospital. I had no idea what happened until speaking with the doctor. He said I had a Grand Mal Seizure (this type causes unconsciousness, collapse and going into a deep sleep). Of course I had no conception what this thing was or how to stop it from happening again. Talk about confusion and state of shock, here I stood or rather lay on a hospital bed. The doctor sent me home with medication to take daily. Well after the bottle was empty I thought I was done taking pills, another big mistake.

Months later I had another seizure, a smaller and different type, known as Petit Mal or Absence. When this seizure happened I got a blank stare with loss of time. I also got a strange feeling, as if my body was going numb from the feet upward. I did not lose consciousness, but was unaware of surroundings, felt very confused and tired afterwards. I could not describe this sensation to the doctor. I found out later in life that this feeling was known as an Aura, the same as being given an anesthesia before surgery.

The seizures seemed to take over my life, and I became what I called, "A Closet Epileptic". This phrase means I was ashamed of my condition and did not want anyone to know. I was so messed up with these words, "epilepsy and seizures", that I would not leave home without all my medication in the original bottles. Some of the doctors were of no help. Because of the way I felt, and the way they handled my office visit, I would come out feeling worse than when I went in for the visit.

After moving to Iowa, I found a doctor who helped me with my situation. He recommended I go to a hospital in Minnesota for 24 hour supervision using an electroencephalograph (EEG) machine. The EEG measured and recorded the activity in my brain waves. After being monitored and forced to stay awake all night, I finally had a Grand Mal seizure. During my stay at this hospital the seizure condition was completely explained. The doctors not only talked and gave me knowledge of my condition, they listened to my thoughts and feelings. I was also given a new routine for taking medications, changes to make in my life and how to handle the

situations. The reason for my seizures is still unknown, however, this was one of the biggest steps in my life as an Epileptic.

There are more day by day things I would like to share with you, but I am not writing a book.

On the brighter side after almost 44 years of marriage to the same loving husband and 46 years of living with seizures, my life is in control. The most important thing I did was learn to talk, accept and share with the public my epileptic seizures.

As a member of CrossRoads CRC in West Des Moines, IA, while reading Breaking Barriers Spring 2016 edition, I wanted to share this information with others who have seizures or know of someone who may have this condition.

I learned that God is in control of my life. He has protected me from harm many times especially while having seizures.