

PE1651/S

Submission of 3 January 2018

Everyone has some emotional problems, of varying degrees. I sure had my fair share since I can remember, all had a root cause, all had a reason. But I did not know how to deal with them, no one was able to guide me, to comfort me, teach me proper coping skills. I thought, I am different, something is wrong with me. Lousy childhood, abandoned by father, further inept parenting, lousy husband, the confusing life-circle continued. What was wrong with me, because I cried too much, asked too many questions, received stoned silence, insomnia, fearful of dark shadows that crept in the night which sometimes were really not shadows at all.

I tried to verbalize these feelings, fears, anxieties, challenges, because I wanted to connect, talking and having someone to listen, to believe, even parents, even husband, even doctors, put up barriers, they did not want to hear, nor did they know what to say. "Let's just shove some pills down your throat". Mother said, "You are the crazy one, you are seeing a psychiatrist, nothing wrong with me, it is something wrong with you". I shut myself off, feeling ostracized, feeling like a bad person.

So thus it went on, post-partum antidepressants that just made me so drowsy, I could not care for my young baby, unresolved marital situation that ended in divorce. If I could only talk, if only someone would listen, if only someone would validate me and my feelings, if only I was told, that it was all part and parcel of living, instead of being "tranquilized", mouth was so dry, head foggy, wobbly legs, I could not speak, if I could. I walked around in a daze, barely participating.

Later on there was Prozac, a touted miracle drug, (got bad press because caused some suicidal deaths) and that was ignored, and then after ten years, Cymbalta, (supposedly another miracle drug for its wonderful chronic pain alleviation. And then came my decision to withdraw from Cymbalta after being on it for 8 years. Nightmares, physical feelings of one leg draining into the other, someone clawing at me in the middle of the night, noises in my ears, could not cry was numb, extreme dizziness, nausea, insomnia. After 4 years, still feeling spacy. Over three years, lying around on the couch, could not think properly, had no incentive, isolation, difficulties in socially, could not relate to people.

Yes, doctors, how arrogant, egotistical, incompetent, monstrous of you to ignore your patients who many times just want someone to talk to, to be validated. Automatically pull out that pen and prescription pad, "yes, we know what will fix you, we will give you a tablet" that will calm your down, make you numb, keep your brain in limbo, masquerade your feelings, keep them hidden out of sight, we are used to giving out pills, that is what we do, medication will help you, and we know about side-effects, all medications have side-effects, but the good of medication outweighs the bad. "We have given you something, we have done what we do best, and we have fixed your problem. Many say they receive no cut-backs from the Pharmaceutical companies, all those free samples, writing pads, calendars, coffee mugs, travel benefits, and what else?

So you completely screw up my brain so it was upside down, every day trying to gain some sort of equilibrium. Having no energy, no initiative, disinterested, trying so hard to valiantly stay afloat, being embarrassed because of lack of motivation called laziness, gave up on my poetry writing, artwork, just wanted to sleep, bright lights, loud noises, harsh smells, seems like my mind was all twisted up, like strings of Christmas tree lights all tangled, desperately trying to keep alight, when the electrical impulses were delayed, detoured, weak, fragmented, nothing ran smoothly, nothing lit up all at once in unison, some were lit, others never fired, never gave a glow. I walk around like a zombie, afraid to make any abrupt movements fearing that I might just splinter into pieces, and be blown away by the least bit of breeze.

I am only one in thousands of people, and even very young people whose lives have been changed, and, not for the better, some people have even more horrendous effects from being on certain drugs, and end up ending their lives, or ending others. Doctors are inept in treating patients in the adverse side-effects of medication especially in withdrawal, have no idea, and then prescribe other drugs to minimize those side- effects. It is imperative that doctors need to be further educated in withdrawal/weaning from medication.

It is all very complex I know, and prescribing drugs upon drugs without the overall health of the patient long term is not taken into consideration, fixing the problem now, can often lead to more severe problems later on without careful monitoring.